DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 213 483 PS 012 665

TITLE Adoption in America, 1981. Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Aging, Family and Human Services of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, United States Senate, Ninety-Seventh Congress, First Session, on a Bill To Examine the Progress That Has Been Made in the Adoption Procedures in America (July 23, 1981).

INSTITUTION Congress of the U.S., Washington, D.C. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

PUB DATE 23 Jul 81

NOTE 139p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Adopted Children; *Adoption; *Delivery Systems; Federal Aid; *Federal Legislation; *Hearings; Program Descriptions; Public Policy

IDENTIFIERS Adolescent Parents; Adoptive Parents; Biological Parents; Congress 97th

ABSTRACT

This document presents hearings conducted by the Labor and Human Resources Subcommittee on Aging, Family and Human Services on the progress that has been made in adoption procedures in the United States. Included are testimony and statements of the subcommittee's members and expert witnesses, statements prepared by professional organizations, previously published articles dealing with relevant issues, and letters submitted for the record. (Author/MP)

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ADOPTION IN AMERICA, 1981

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGING, FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-SEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

A BILL TO EXAMINE THE PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE IN THE ADOPTION PROCEDURES IN AMERICA

JULY 28, 1981

PS 012665

Printed for the use of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
86-879 O WASHINGTON : 1981

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ADOPTION IN AMERICA, 1981

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1981

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGING, FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES,
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:50 a.m., in room 4232, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Jeremiah Denton [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Senator Denton.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR DENTON

Senator DENTON. Good morning. This hearing of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Aging, Family and Human Services, will come to order.

We will concern ourselves this morning with the institution of adoption in America. I will begin the proceedings with the presentation of some opening remarks. I want to recognize that we have Senator Jepsen sitting in front of us, and I will have a few words about that in my opening remarks.

I want to welcome both the guests and the witnesses here, and I note that many here today have the distinction of being in the business of actually building families by bringing together children and loving parents. To me, that enterprise is uniquely admirable, and I look forward to hearing testimony from people who have shown compassion for those children who need homes and those parents who want to provide a home.

Along with the other members of the subcommittee, I want to support those who wish to adopt and who wish to arrange adoptions. Senator Jepsen has much more grounding in this effort in Congress than I, and has in the course of three Congresses introduced three proadoption bills, and we will be hearing from him first.

Senator Metzenbaum has recently introduced legislation that would provide tax relief for adoptive parents so as to ease the financial burden of adoption. Senator Humphrey has time and again spoken up for the adoption cause.

Members of this subcommittee recently approved at the full committee level the adolescent family life bill, which would emphasize provision of care services and adoption counseling to pregnant adolescents. There are at least three other pieces of proposed legislation in the Senate that would in some way support the adoption of America's waiting and infant children.

There is a long history of congressional interest and action in the field of adoption, and I intend to sustain this subcommittee's long-

time commitment to adoption as a valuable social institution. Many of my colleagues are themselves adoptive parents.

I would say that nothing is more relevant to the kind of mind-set Americans need to adopt to correct what I perceive as a very deteriorating sociological set of conditions in this country than the kind of focus we are going to have today. I am deeply admiring of the people who are present today.

In reading about adoption, I have learned that the adoption of the homeless young is an ancient custom, and in 20th century America there is a combination of old and new problems for those concerned with the well-being of that institution. For several decades, couples have experienced frustration, long delays and difficulties in seeking to adopt children. Recently, several additional trends have been developing which will further exacerbate the problem.

In reading about that history and speaking of 20th century America, I was surprised, and many of you may not know, that adoption in terms of legislation and law is more or less uniquely American, beginning in the 1920's in terms of law, received as sort of a tradition from England, but addressed by law first by the United States of America.

So, we have an example of American compassion which is in addition to that learned from our British friends, noted for their fair play, and never has that compassion been more needed than today, as I mentioned.

According to the latest calculations, no more than 4 percent of unmarried teenagers who give birth are choosing an adoption plan for their babies. Some estimate that there has been as much as a 50-percent decline in the number of adoptions between 1970 and 1980.

Increasing numbers of teenagers are keeping their babies even though most are ill prepared to become full-time parents. Moreover, the legalization of abortion has dramatically decreased the number of adolescents who give birth to the babies they have conceived.

In 1979, nearly twice as many babies were destroyed in the womb as were carried to term by teenagers. Combined, these two trends mean that fewer and fewer babies are actually available for adoption. Couples who wish to adopt infants are kept on longer and longer waiting lists while more and more potentially adoptable babies are not being born, but aborted as simply unwanted or just overcrowding more and more the homes in which they are kept, if they are permitted to be born.

Unfortunately, many young pregnant girls do not know the positive aspects of adoption for the child. Many do not know that their baby can have an intact and loving family that can more often provide a more secure and brighter future than she can.

Instead, strong peer pressure is erroneously instilling the belief that giving your baby up for adoption is a cruel punishment for the baby, whereas truly too often the fate of the baby born to an unwed mother who lives with successive men in or out of wedlock contributes to the grim and growing child abuse statistics.

Meanwhile, the demand for adoptable babies has not abated. There are estimated to be 10 million Americans who are infertile.

One out of every 5 couples, or 6 million couples of child-bearing age, are infertile. At present, if only one-quarter of these couples try to adopt a healthy infant, that means that 1.5 million couples would be competing for just 22,000 infants.

However, just as there are couples waiting to adopt, there are certain children waiting to be adopted. There are currently over 100,000 special-needs children available for adoption. More often than not, these children have emotional and physical needs or are minority children. We must do all we can to help find homes for these waiting American children.

It strikes me as remarkable that we can worry about the snail darter or seals in Alaska and spend millions of dollars in advertisements in the newspapers and lobbying, and here we have people like ourselves—young, created in the image and likeness of God, whose happiness is at least as important as ours, with all of the almost infinite capacities of human nature. And yet we have this situation and not much being done about it, except by those who represent them in this room.

Under current law, there have been attempts to eliminate barriers for the adoption of children, especially those with these special needs. In today's hearings, I hope that we can examine progress that may have been made in this area.

This hearing will also give us the opportunity to discuss Senator Levin's proposal to establish a Federal computerized adoption registry. The matter of the confidentiality of adoption records is of tremendous importance, and I hope that we can have a thorough airing of the points of view represented here today.

In summary, it should be recognized that the act of adoption is an expression of the very best qualities found in human nature. I am confident that this subcommittee shall always promote in a bipartisan manner those measures which strengthen the institution of adoption in America.

We have many conferences going on concerned with the Senate-House reconciliation process, and we have other committee hearings going on. Senator Humphrey would have been here today; however, he is chairing another hearing and has provided a statement that will be inserted in the record along with a statement supplied by Senator Metzenbaum.

[The prepared statements of Senator Humphrey and Senator Metzenbaum, follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR HUMPHREY

Senator HUMPHREY. I commend the distinguished chairman on his diligence in holding today's hearing to establish the appropriate Federal role in the promotion of adoption. Presenting a forum for the discussion of the issues surrounding adoption is not only timely but imperative if society is to move toward an era when the value of human life is appreciated.

Of particular interest to me are proposals which have been evaluated over the past several years to establish a Federal registry for matching adult adoptees with their biological parents. Any legislation dealing with adoption must be based on several critical considerations: The well-being of the adopted child, the importance of fostering a healthy positive relationship between the adoptive

family and the adopted child, and the interest in providing adoption as a viable option to the biological parents who, for whatever reason, wish to exercise the option of placing their child for adoption.

I firmly believe that establishing a registry through which adopted children and biological parents can meet, even if both parties pursue this end, could have a chilling effect on the institution of adoption. Questions which automatically come to mind include the impact of this "reunion" on the adoptive parents who have raised the child as their own and protection for a mother or father who doesn't seek to meet his/her biological child when the other parent does, Finally, in a time when we must look outside the Federal Government for answers to some of our social needs I question the role of the Federal Government in establishing this type of "registry."

I look forward to reviewing today's testimony and evaluating the opinions of those who have experience in various aspects of the field of adoption to reach a deeper understanding of this critical issue.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR METZENBAUM

Senator METZENBAUM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take this opportunity to commend you for focusing this subcommittee's attention on the problems of adoption. There are some 120,000 children in the United States today waiting to become part of loving families. These children are both infants and teenagers, healthy and handicapped, well-adjusted or emotionally impaired. But despite their strengths and weaknesses, all of these children deserve the advantages of stable home life.

Adoption is also an opportunity for parents to share in the rewards of childrearing, an opportunity which many couples might never experience. Mr. Chairman, so many of these couples unable to have their own children often have unbounding love for a homeless child. The ability to be able to share that love through adoption can only strengthen family life.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, I have recently introduced legislation as part of the "Stronger American Families Act" to help adoptive parents meet the high cost of adoption. I think that all of us here agree on the urgent need to encourage American families to open their hearts and homes to children. But the fact is that our Tax Code discourages many middle income families from doing so.

Consider, for example, the fact that adopting families, whose median income is $20,400 per year, must pay an average of between $4,000 and $6,000 and sometimes as much as $7,000 in various adoption fees. That comes to 20 percent or more of a family's gross annual income—and without 1 penny being spent for feeding, clothing, and raising the child.

My bill would allow couples to deduct the cost of adoption as well as encourage employers to provide adoptive benefits. This approach has received the wholehearted approach of the National Committee for adoption as well as such businesses as Xerox and felt products.

Mr. Chairman, I support your initiative in examining ways in which adoption can be made a viable alternative to families who

want to love, cherish, and care for a homeless child. I look forward to listening to the witnesses.

Senator DENTON. Now, it is my privilege to introduce Senator Jepsen, the distinguished Senator from Iowa. He is sponsoring the Family Protection Act, which is an extremely comprehensive effort in which adoption proposals are an important part.

I have come to know this gentleman well enough to realize that in addition to a great sensitivity and a great compassion, he has great courage—moral courage, the rarest kind of courage. And he will stand up and be counted; he will stand for causes which he knows to be right even when he knows that it will be at the expense of being opposed and even ridiculed by those who see things differently, and in my opinion without commonsense.

It is an honor to welcome you here this morning, Senator Jepsen. I see that you are accompanied by counsel. Would you care to introduce him, sir?

STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER W. JEPSEN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF IOWA, ACCOMPANIED BY RON LANGSTON

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would like to introduce Ron Langston, a member of my staff who is working on issues in this area and in the area of family and human services.

Mr. Chairman, please accept my appreciation and sincere thanks for allowing me to deliver the keynote testimony in today's hearing on adoption. The issue of adoption is a subject that I am sure everyone here today believes is very essential to the American family and to the national interest. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your remarks in introducing me, and I make special note of your efforts and your sensitivity in the area of adoption, and applaud you for calling this hearing.

I might add also, Mr. Chairman, that your becoming a member of the U.S. Senate was an answer to a lot of prayers of a lot of people around this country, including myself. I am both honored and thankful that you are here.

To begin with, one of the most critical issues in the American adoption process realistically are the costs that are involved. Mr. Chairman, in the interest of addressing this problem, I have introduced several pieces of legislation over the past 2½ years.

During the 96th Congress, I introduced Senate file 2959, which provided tax deductions to individuals incurring expenses in an adoption during the taxable year. During the 97th Congress, I reintroduced this legislation with several added provisions, and we are in the process of even refining and changing some of these at this time.

The bill, S. 99, provides a tax deduction ceiling of $3,500 for domestic adoptions and $4,500 for international adoptions after the first $500 incurred. We are in the process of reexamining the so-called deductible at this time, in addition to the limits.

In addition, I incorporated S. 99 into a bill that I recently introduced on June 17, as you so advised in your opening remarks, when we introduced the Family Protection Act, of which you were a cosponsor. In that bill, S. 1378, an additional $1,000 exemption is allowed for each child born to or adopted by a taxpayer during that

year. A $3,000 exemption is also granted to the parents of a handicapped child, to be used only in the single taxable year the child is born. But a taxpayer adopting a child of mixed race, a child 6 years or older, or a handicapped child, would receive a $3,000 tax deduction for a single taxable year.

Of course, obviously, the effort here and the emphasis has been to try to help resolve and promote the adoption of those youngsters that are realistically difficult to place, and certainly not on the top of the most-desired list by those looking for adoption.

I might add, as you have indicated, Mr. Chairman, that this bill and many of its areas have received much ridicule from many who would carpet anything that is basically sound in this country. And it is difficult for me to understand the thinking of the people who call themselves compassionate who would ridicule the procedures as suggested, this just being one of them in the family protection bill.

In spite of the high cost, tedious technical legal work, and administrative delays, there are a great number of individual families who have a strong desire to adopt a child. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, there are approximately 150,000 adoptions annually in America. One-third of these adoptions are among families and relatives; one-third involve agency adoptions; the other one-third involve independent adoptions.

According to a report written at my request by the Library of Congress, it is assumed in their analysis that 100,000 domestic adoptions and 5,000 international adoptions take place in the United States each year. These figures are within the range of estimates provided by the Joint Committee on Taxation.

It is further assumed that these adoptions are divided among the filers of the 38,679,233 taxable joint returns of husbands and wives filed for 1978. The losses in revenue income are calculated with 1978 tax law because 1978 tax data is the most recent available.

Of these returns, 16.4 percent reported adjusted gross income of less than $12,000; 63.6 percent reported adjusted gross income of $12,000 up to but not including $30,000; and 20 percent reported adjusted gross income of $30,000 or more.

In short, interestingly enough, Mr. Chairman, nearly two-thirds of the taxable joint returns for purposes of adoptions in 1978 were middle-income taxpayers. When the returns for lower income taxpayers are included, nearly four-fifths, or 80 percent of the joint returns for purposes of adoption were lower and middle-income taxpayers.

According to the national study of social services to children and their families in 1977, only 50,000 of 102,000 children free for adoption through public agencies were placed in private homes. Available children are not being adopted. My proposal will provide the incentive, or maybe I should say take away the disincentive, to see that these children find a home.

Mr. Chairman, as I again noted in the record on July 24, 1980, I realize that in this period of economic crisis it is not popular to talk about new or additional expenditures. Nevertheless, the adoption process and the public interest in insuring that children in need, as well as individual families who desire to adopt, have every reasonable available alternative to do so, must be addressed.

I would also, Mr. Chairman, at the end of my remarks comment on the area of expense. I think I will clearly point out that it is not a loss of revenue, but actually it would be saving the country and taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, in addition to providing some very humane treatment and services.

According to the Senate Finance Committee report to H.R. 3434, the Child Welfare Amendments of 1979, the cost of foster care under aid to families with dependent children was approximately $351,171,877 in 1977. I emphasize again, this figure only represents foster care under AFDC. Unfortunately, figures for 1979 through 1980 are not available on the cost of foster care. Nevertheless, it is expected that foster care in America has exceeded $400 million today.

Therefore, legislation which provides tax deductions or even a tax credit will have the effect of reducing the cost of foster care. If children are taken out of the foster care setting and placed in homes as adopted children, the cost to state and local governments and the Federal match for foster care will be greatly reduced and, as such, represents a very attractive offset of expenditures to the Treasury.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to note for the record that I am not advocating the elimination or reduction of foster care institutions. It is my strong belief that there is a continued need for foster care institutions for those children and minors who unfortunately are never finally placed.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the tax proposals I have offered would help curb the dramatic impact in the initial cost of an adoption. To let the prohibitive initial costs of adoption deny a child an adoptive home and family is an injustice against the child and the prospective family, as well as our society.

Every child in America should have the opportunity to be surrounded by love and warmth of a family. Likewise, every interested family should have the opportunity to share its sense of family with a child in need.

Mr. Chairman, I have a cost analysis of S. 99 which I would like to make part of the official record. The analysis reflects the cost of S. 99 when a tax deduction table is used, and also when a tax credit is utilized.

Mr. Chairman, I want to close my remarks today by thanking you for your concern and for the concern you and your committee have expressed regarding this issue of adoption. With your help, we are certainly on our way to solving the problems and finding solutions that will prove to everyone's benefit.

I hope that the Congress is willing and prepared to respond to this as effectively and responsibly as you have. I appreciate your giving me the chance to speak to you, and look forward to any comments or questions that you or anyone on your committee may have.

Mr. Chairman, along the lines of the remarks that you made in your introduction about the forces that have been advocating what you and I consider to be not a positive approach to some of our problems, and the fact that some time ago--within the last 4 weeks, in fact--I was threatened with a lawsuit by an organization called Planned Parenthood and individuals of my home State--in the law-

suit, they supposedly indicated that I had suggested that abortion should not be considered as part of a way to plan for parenthood or family planning.

There are other options, and there are certainly many things which I promote by way of education, and that type of thing, that I thought they should be concerned with. They indicated and threatened the lawsuit because they said they were being unjustly accused; that they had never in any way advocated or lobbied for abortion.

Last Sunday in the Washington Post--Sunday, July 19—you may have seen this full-page ad. I do not know what the cost of a full-page ad is, but it says, "The real moral majority may be you." It says, "Do not be confused if you support legalized abortion, because you are part of the real moral majority."

They go on to say, "It is true; year after year, independent public opinion polls have shown that the vast majority of Americans," et cetera, et cetera. And it ends by saying, "Write your Senators and Representatives; urge them to heed America's true moral majority." You know, let everybody have abortions. It is signed, "Planned Parenthood Federation of America."

I guess they probably will call off the lawsuit, since they suggested they had nothing to do with this. I wanted to put this in the record just to illustrate that I will not judge what the intent of the national basis of this organization is. It is not for me to judge what the intent of a person's mind or heart is.

But I would suggest that there are options and there are many constructive ways, with compassion; that we can help by way of direction and example to bring family direction and family support and deal with the problems of modern-day America.

The advocation of killing our young as an answer to solving some of our social problems is not one of those options that I would support. Providing in every way that we can, the encouragement of adoption of children is a positive and constructive option and solution.

My wife and I have personally over the last few years been involved in trying to assist people who have asked--I am sure you have received the same requests in your office--about adoptions, and who are eager and anxious to adopt children. We have listened, we have agonized, we have prayed, and we have wept with the couples in their frustration of trying to adopt--the length of time, the redtape, the cost.

It is ironic that there are literally millions of men and women, couples, who want to give love and care and affection to a young person, and there are literally millions who are wanting and needing that love and care and affection. And anything and everything that can be done to bring these two groups together, I applaud and it has my 100 percent support.

I thank you and commend you for your interest and your efforts in this area.

[The prepared statement of Senator Jepsen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROGER W. JEPSEN

Mr. Chairman, please accept my appreciation and sincere thanks for allowing me to deliver the keynote testimony in today's hearing on adoptions.

This issue of adoption is a subject that I am sure everyone here today believes is very essential to the American family and to the national interest.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I make special note of your efforts and sensitivity in the area of adoption and applaud you for calling this hearing.

To begin with, one of the most critical issues in the American adoption process are the costs involved.

Mr. Chairman, in the interest of addressing this problem, I have introduced several pieces of legislation over the past two-and-a-half years.

During the 96th Congress, I introduced S. 2959 which provided tax deductions to individuals incurring expenses in an adoption during the taxable year.

During the 97th Congress, I reintroduced this legislation with several added provisions. The bill, S. 99, provides a tax deduction ceiling of $3,500 for domestic adoptions and $4,500 for international adoptions after the first $500 incurred.

In addition, I incorporated S. 99 into a bill I recently introduced on June 17, the Family Protection Act. In that bill, S. 1378, and additional $1,000 exemption is allowed for each child born to, or adopted by, a taxpayer during that year. A $3,000 exemption is also granted to the parents of a handicapped child to be used only in the single taxable year the child is born. A taxpayer adopting a child of mixed race, a child 6 years or older, or a handicapped child would receive a $3,000 tax deduction for a single taxable year.

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According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, there are approximately 150,000 adoptions annually in America. One-third of these adoptions are among families and relatives; one-third involves agency adoptions; the other one-third involves independent adoptions.

According to a report written at my request by the Library of Congress, it is assumed in their analysis that 100,000 domestic adoptions and 5,000 international adoptions and 5,000 international adoptions take place in the United States each year. These figures are within the range of estimates provided by the Joint Committee on Taxation. It is further assumed that these adoptions are divided among the filers of the 38,679,233 taxable joint returns of husbands and wives filed or 1978 (revenue losses are calculated with 1978 tax law because 1978 tax data is the most recent available). Of these returns, 16.4 percent reported adjusted gross income (AGI) of less than $12,000; 63.6 percent reported AGI from $12,000 up to but not including $30,000; and 20.0 percent reported AGI of $30,000 or more.

In short, nearly two-thirds of the taxable joint returns for purposes of adoptions in 1978 were middle-income taxpayers. When the returns for lower-income taxpayers are included nearly ⅘ or 80 percent of the joint returns for purposes of adoption were lower- and middle-income taxpayers.

According to the national study of social services to children and their families in 1977, only 50,000 of 102,000 children free for adoption through public agencies were placed in private homes. Available children are not being adopted. My proposal will provide the incentive, or maybe I should say take away the disincentive, to see that these children find a home.

Mr. Chairman, as I again noted in the record on July 24, 1980, I realize that in this period of economic crisis it is not popular to talk about new or additional expenditures. Nevertheless, the adoption process and the public interest in insuring that children in need, as well as individual families who desire to adopt, have every reasonable available alternative to do so must be addressed.

According to the Senate Finance Committee Report to H.R. 3434, the Child Welfare Amendments of 1979, the cost of foster care under aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) was approximately $351,171,877 in 1977. I emphasize again, this figure only represents foster care under AFDC. Unfortunately, figures for 1979-80 are not available on the cost of foster care. Nevertheless, it is expected that foster care in America has exceeded $400 million today.

Therefore, legislation which provides tax deductions or even a tax credit will have the effect on reducing the cost of foster care. If children are taken out of the foster care setting and placed in homes as adopted children, the cost to State and local governments and the Federal match for foster care will be greatly reduced, and as such, represents a very attractive offset of expenditures to the Treasury.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to note for the record that I am not advocating the elimination or reduction of foster care institutions. It is my strong belief that there is a continued need for foster care institutions for those children and minors who unfortunately are never finally placed.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the tax proposals I have offered would help curb the dramatic impact in the initial cost of an adoption. To let the prohibitive initial costs

of adoption deny a child an adoptive home and family is an injustice against the child and the prospective family, as well as our society. Every child in America should have the opportunity to be surrounded by the love and warmth of a family. And likewise, every interested family should have the opportunity to share its sense of family with a child in need.

Mr. Chairman, I have a cost analysis of S. 99 which I would like to make part of the official record. The analysis reflects the cost of S. 99 when a tax deduction table is used and also when a tax credit is utilized.

Mr. Chairman, I want to close today by thanking you for the concern you and your committee have expressed regarding this issue of adoption. With your help, we are certainly on our way to solving the problems and finding solutions that will prove to everyone's benefit. I hope the Congress is willing and prepared to respond to this as effectively and responsibly as you have. I appreciate you giving me the chance to speak to you, and look forward to any comments or questions that you, or anyone on your committee, may have. Thank you.

TABLE 1.—REVENUE EFFECTS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION RESULTING FROM THE LIMITED TAX DEDUCTION FOR ADOPTION EXPENSES PROVIDED BY S. 99: A HYPOTHETICAL CASE

	Lowest income ($9,000 AGI, $6,453 taxable)			Middle income ($19,000 AGI, $15,447 taxable)			High income ($40,000 AGI, $33,160 taxable)			All income groups	
	Number of adoptions	Revenue loss per adoption	Revenue loss	Number of adoptions	Revenue loss per adoption	Revenue loss	Number of adoptions	Revenue loss per adoption	Revenue loss	Number of adoptions	Revenue loss
Domestic adoptions:											
$500 or less	4,100			15,900			5,000			25,000	
$1,500	4,100	$162.53	$666,373	15,900	$227.41	$3,615,819	5,000	$390.00	$1,950,000.00	25,000	$6,232,192.00
$3,000	4,100	387.59	1,589,119	15,900	557.41	8,862,819	5,000	958.80	4,794,000.00	25,000	15,245,938.00
$4,000	4,100	493.01	2,021,341	15,900	777.41	12,360,819	5,000	1,318.80	6,594,000.00	25,000	20,976,160.00
Total	16,400		4,276,833	63,600		24,839,457	20,000		13,338,000.00	100,000	42,454,290.00
International adoptions:											
$4,000	164	493.01	80,853.64	636	777.41	494,432.76	200	1,318.80	263,760.00	1,000	839,046.40
$5,000	164	493.01	80,853.64	636	989.82	629,525.52	200	1,678.80	335,760.00	1,000	1,046,139.16
$6,000				636	989.82	629,525.52	364	1,678.80	611,083.20	1,000	1,240,608.72
$7,000				636	989.82	629,525.52	364	1,678.80	611,083.20	1,000	1,240,608.72
$8,000							1,000	1,678.80	1,678,800.00	1,000	1,678,800.00
Total	328		161,707.28	2,544		2,383,009.32	2,128		3,500,486.40	5,000	6,045,203.00
Grand total	16,728		4,438,540.28	66,144		27,222,466.32	22,128		16,838,486.40	105,000	48,499,493.00

TABLE 2.—REVENUE EFFECTS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION RESULTING FROM A LIMITED TAX CREDIT FOR ADOPTION EXPENSES: A HYPOTHETICAL CASE

	Low income ($9,000 AGI, $6,453 taxable)			Middle income ($19,000 AGI, $15,447 taxable)			High income ($40,000 AGI, $33,160)			All income groups	
	Number of adoptions	Revenue loss per adoption	Revenue loss	Number of adoptions	Revenue loss per adoption	Revenue loss	Number of adoptions	Revenue loss per adoption	Revenue loss	Number of adoptions	Revenue loss
Domestic adoptions:											
$500 or less	4,100	0	0	15,900	0	0	5,000	0	0	25,000	0
$1,500	4,100	$250.00	$1,025,000.00	15,900	$250	$3,975,000	5,000	$250	$1,250,000	25,000	$6,250,000.00
$3,000	4,100	493.01	2,021,341.00	15,900	625	9,937,500	5,000	625	3,125,000	25,000	15,083,841.00
$4,000	4,100	493.01	2,021,341.00	15,900	875	13,912,500	5,000	875	4,375,000	25,000	20,308,841.00
Total	16,400		5,067,682.00	63,600		27,825,000	20,000		8,750,000	100,000	41,642,682.00
International adoptions:											
$4,000	164	493.01	80,853.64	636	875	556,500	200	875	175,000	1,000	812,353.64
$5,000	164	493.01	80,853.64	636	1,125	715,500	200	1,125	225,000	1,000	1,021,353.64
$6,000				636	1,125	715,500	364	1,125	409,500	1,000	1,125,000.00
$7,000				636	1,125	715,500	364	1,125	409,500	1,000	1,125,000.00
$8,000							1,000	1,125	1,125,000	1,000	1,125,000.00
Total	328		161,707.28	2,544		2,703,000	2,128		2,344,000	5,000	5,208,707.28
Grand total	16,728		5,229,389.28	66,144		30,528,000	22,128		11,094,000	105,000	46,851,389.28

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Senator Jepsen, for that clear and useful presentation. You may be sure that we shall include that advertisement in the record. It seems ironic that family planning would be the term applied to advising a 13-year-old, many years before she is considering marriage, to have an abortion as part of a family planning program. The terms seems to be a gross misnomer, apart from getting into the morality or happiness factors.

We will, without objection, make your entire statement and the cost analysis a part of the record. I would support your efforts to provide tax exemption as a means of encouraging the adoption of children in foster care. It is my hope that your work and the other testimony given here today will lead to a joint hearing in the near future with the members of the Finance Committee to explore fully the entire question of tax incentives for adoption.

During the course of the hearing, I will be asking many of the witnesses about their view of your adoption tax relief proposal. You have certainly provided us with much to think about, and I once again thank you for taking the time out of your busy, busy day to come and testify. It shows your proportionality of interest, and I express my admiration for that.

The adoptive families and children of America are fortunate to have men such as yourself to champion this cause.

If there are no questions—and I am sure we must defer them because of your schedule—thank you, and have a good day, Senator Jepsen.

Senator JEPSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Mr. Langston.

Our first panel of witnesses is here today to represent the Department of Health and Human Services and the administration. I should like to welcome Mrs. Marjorie Mecklenburg, head of the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs, and Mr. Warren Master, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Administration on Children, Youth and Families.

It is a pleasure to see both of you once again, and I thank you for appearing today on such short notice; I know how busy you must be. I understand that Mr. Master has a pressing departmental appointment. Feel free to excuse yourself, sir, when the time arrives at which that would be necessary.

Would you all proceed with whatever statements you care to make?

STATEMENT OF WARREN MASTER, ACTING COMMISSIONER, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES; ACCOMPANIED BY MARJORIE MECKLENBURG, DIRECTOR, ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. MASTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have submitted testimony. If you agree, what I will do is highlight some of the aspects of the testimony in the interest of time.

Senator DENTON. Certainly, please.

Mr. MASTER. Again, we appreciate the opportunity to discuss the status of adoption in America and to discuss S. 999. I am accompa-

nied, as you mentioned, by Marjorie Mecklenburg, the Director of HHS' adolescent pregnancy program.

I would like to share with you very briefly, what is happening in the field of adoption.

First, for most of human history, adoption was seen primarily as a service to the family. Today, adoption is viewed as a service for the child as well as the family. There has also been a change in the kind of children served. For many years, adoption was seen as an appropriate service only for infant white children. Rarely were older, minority, physically and emotionally handicapped, or developmentally disadvantaged children considered candidates for adoption, nor were siblings who needed to be placed as a group. These are the "hard to place" or special needs children.

We know that permanent homes can be found for minority and other special needs children, and most of them will thrive once they are adopted. For example, Homes for Black Children, an agency in Detroit, Mich. through concentrated efforts has placed over 700 black children with black families in the past 12 years. This agency is now engaged in a project to teach other agencies how to establish a similar program.

The field has begun to further address the issues concerning these special needs children. This new focus of concern has been spurred by a number of factors, including increased awareness of the importance of permanency planning for children removed from their homes; recognition that because of a lack of services to families in crisis both prior to foster care placement and during placement, children are remaining in foster care for excessive periods of time; awareness that children in foster care often experience multiple placements, considered detrimental to their emotional and developmental well-being; concerns about the rising cost of foster care services due to the long period of time children remain in foster care and the recognition that many such children should be freed and placed for adoption at lower costs to the public; and, last, the development of a vocal constituency, as you noted earlier, concerned about these special needs children.

Therefore, a major focus in adoption today is on increasing the number of families who have the ability and the desire to provide permanent, loving homes for these special needs children.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to share with you some of the programs that have been developed to find adoptive families for these children. The Federal Government has worked collaboratively with States and private and voluntary agencies on these programs.

For example, we have inservice staff development programs, specific recruitment resources activities, minority efforts. A small voluntary agency in New York City, the Council on Adoptable Children, is finding Hispanic families for Hispanic children. Another example is the work of the Los Angeles Department of Adoption, which has special programs for finding Hispanic and black adoptive families for Hispanic and black children.

We have worked with adoptive parent groups and volunteer networks. Subsidized adoption assistance is another area of concern. In the past 13 years, 49 States, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands have passed legislation which permits subsidized adoption. It should be emphasized, however, that a subsidy pro-

gram is intended neither to supplant community efforts to recruit adoptive homes without subsidy, nor to be a substitute for other resources in the community.

Beyond this, we have moved ahead with an adoption information resource exchange system. Since the early 1960s, adoption exchanges have been viewed as viable vehicles for local agencies to find homes for waiting children. Most adoption exchanges provide matching services which register and try to unite children waiting for permanent homes with those seeking to adopt.

Some operate picture listings which make photographs and descriptions of waiting children available to the public, and an increasing number go beyond the listing to active involvement in publicity, training and advocacy. The specific services may vary, but all have the same purpose: to help local agencies find permanent homes for waiting children.

At the national level, the Department of Health and Human Services supports a national adoption exchange, which provides matching and referral services and greater exposure for children with the most exceptional needs. This exchange, however, is only part of a larger effort; it is intended to supplement rather than replace State and local efforts.

These are some of the programs which respond to the major issues in adoption in America today. These are the types of activities we will continue to work on in collaboration with public and voluntary agencies throughout the country.

An additional topic I would like to address today concerns the issues related to adoption and adolescent pregnancy. Adoption should be recognized as a positive choice for pregnant adolescents.

According to recent studies, only a very small percentage of teenage girls now choose adoption for their child, as you had mentioned earlier. Ten years ago, 9 out of 10 young women giving birth out of wedlock chose to give their baby up for adoption. Today, these statistics are reversed, and 9 out of 10 teenage mothers choose to keep their babies.

One theory for this change is that many of those single pregnant women who would have chosen adoption in earlier years now choose abortion. Another is that the stigma of single parenthood has lessened and pressure from peers and parents is on the side of keeping the child.

In addition, a recent study by the Rand Corp. reveals that most teenage mothers who keep their babies shun adoption as an unmerited punishment for the baby, as you had mentioned earlier. Pressure by society and social work professionals no longer prods unmarried teenagers to place their children for adoption.

A number of factors in addition to peer pressure and societal attitude will determine the choice that is made. It would be helpful if young men and women have an opportunity to explore their attitudes and obtain knowledge about parenting, children and family life before pregnancy occurs. Education provided by communities at the local level for parenthood and child development may motivate some adolescents to postpone parenting and assist those who do become pregnant to make informed decisions about their own future and that of their child.

There is a current need for a better understanding of adoption and its possibilities without returning to the 1950's practice of pressuring a young woman to relinquish her child. It is certainly in the best interest of all concerned that such a choice be made carefully and with an adequate exploration of the facts and their implication for the future. A young woman's decision to relinquish or keep her child is a complex one which requires sensitive consideration.

The following comments are in response to the provisions of S. 989, a bill to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978 to provide for a national computerized adoption identification center, and for other purposes.

Essentially, the Department opposes the enactment of S. 989. This legislation would create a new, narrow Federal categorical program. The aministration believes that the most effective delivery of services is through the block grant approach.

In addition, we see significant potential problems in the operation of the proposed system. In order for a successful match to be made, the adoptee and the biological relative, unknown to each other, would both have to voluntarily sign up with the identification system. The volume of requests would have to be extremely high for the chances of this happening to be good.

We also see problems in obtaining access to the information necessary to make a match for applicants, or, if information is obtained, in breaching confidentiality of information. Given the sensitivity of this type of information, we do not think it would be advisable to retain the data for 10 years in a national computerized system.

Finally, there does not appear to be any clear justification for a Federal role in establishment of a national computerized adoption identification center. The further conclusion of the Department is that the need for a computerized adoption identification program is far less critical to children and families than other national needs in the area of adoption—those that we discussed earlier.

During this period of acute fiscal constraint, we cannot conclude that limited Federal funds should be made available for such an activity.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Master follows:]

STATEMENT OF WARREN MASTER, ACTING COMMISSIONER, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the status of adoption in America and to discuss S. 989. I am accompanied by Marjorie Kecklenburg, Director of the Adolescent Pregnancy Program. I would like to share with you and the members of the Committee what is happening in the field of adoption.

For most of human history, adoption was seen primarily as a service to the family. Today, adoption is viewed as a service for the child as well as the family. Another factor in recent years has been the growing number of single people seeking to become adoptive parents, which has increased the potential pool for adoptive placements.

There has also been a change in the kind of children served. For many years, adoption was seen as appropriate only for infant white children. Rarely were older, minority, physically and emotionally handicapped, or developmentally disadvantaged children considered candidates for adoption, nor were siblings who needed to be placed as a group. These are the "hard-to-place" or special needs children.

Let us look at statistics on one of these special needs groups. The National Study of Social Services to Children and Their Families found that there were 502,000 children in foster care in the United States in 1977; over 185,000 or 37 percent were minority children. Twenty-eight percent were Black children, 5 percent Hispanic children and 4 percent children of other minority groups such as Native American and Asian-Pacific. Yet in 1976 minority children represented only 17 percent of the general population under 18 years of age. Minority children, then, were to be found in foster care more than twice as frequently as white children.

Of the 502,000 children in foster care, more than 102,000 were legally freed for adoption. Sixty-two percent of these children were white and thirty-seven percent minority. Again, the number of minority children waiting for adoption is much greater than their proportionate representation in the general population.

If we look at the figures on handicapped choldren, the study found that nearly ten percent of the children in foster care were physically handicapped. Of the 102,000 children free for adoption, 8 percent were physically handicapped.

We know that permanent homes can be found for minority and other special needs children and most of them will thrive once they are adopted. For example, Homes for Black Children, an agency in Detroit, Michigan, through concentrated efforts has placed over 700 Black children with Black families in the past 12 year. This agency is now engaged in a project to teach other agencies how to establish a similar program.

The field has begun to further address the issues concerning these special needs children. This new focus of concern has been spurred by a number of factors including: (1) Increased awareness of the importance of permanent planning for children removed from their homes: (2) recognition that because of a lack of services to families in crisis (both prior to foster care placement and during placement) children are remaining in foster care for excessive periods of time; (3) awareness that children in foster care often experience multiple placements considered detrimental to their emotional and developmental well-being; (4) concerns about the rising costs of foster care services due to the long period of time children remained in foster care and the recognition that many such children should be freed and placed for adoption at lower costs to the public; and (5) the development of a vocal constituency concerned about these special needs children.

While the focus of adoption services is shifting to the special needs child, one must not lose sight of the fact that the majority of children adopted are still healthy infants and that the majority of couples wishing to adopt seek this type of child. In this area of adoption practice there is a small pool of children and a large pool of potential adoptive parents. On the contrary, for the special needs child there is a small pool of prospective adoptive families and a large pool of waiting children.

Therefore, a major focus in adoption today is on increasing the number of families who have the ability and the desire to provide permanent loving homes for these special needs children.

Much has been learned in the past decade:

First, we know the terms "hard to place" and "children who cannot be adopted" no longer need apply. We know that there is virtually no child, no matter how complex his or her needs, for whom a loving home cannot be found if the right efforts are made, and if in some cases, subsidies are provided to meet the child's needs.

Second, we know that because these children traditionally have been viewed as unadoptable, there are numerous legal, programmatic, policy and attitudinal barriers which stand between these waiting children and the families who would want to adopt.

Third, we know that the most essential changes must take place within the states. The states determine the policies, programs and resources which are available to find homes for these waiting children. We have focused, therefore, on helping the states make the much needed changes.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to share with in some of these programs that have been developed to find adoptive families for these children. The Federal government has worked collaboratively with states and voluntary agencies on these programs.

These activities include:

1. In-service staff development.—We are completing a curriculum to assist workers in learning how to place special needs children. Throughout the country, states have participated in field testing the curriculum for their future use.

2. Specific recruitment resources.—There is continuing need to inform the public of these children and their need for adoption. The media, public service announcements, community meetings and a variety of recruitment methods are currently being used. This effort must be ongoing so that these children receive significant local, regional, and national attention.

3. Minority efforts.—As we consider that 37 percent of the children needing adoption are minority children, efforts must be intensified to locate families for these children. As I stated previously we know that families can be found. For example, a small voluntary agency in New York City, the Council on Adoptable Children, is finding Hispanic families for Hispanic children. Another example is the work of the Los Angeles Department of Adoption which has special programs for finding Hispanic and Black adoptive families for Hispanic and Black Children.

4. Adoptive parent groups/volunteer networks.—Adoptive Parents groups have been forerunners in working toward finding homes for all waiting children. Local parent groups are joined together in a national organization to share their work and concerns.

Parent groups now work with agencies in many ways. For example, a voluntary sectarian agency in Pennsylvania has pioneered a program of adoptive parents working with agency staff to find and evaluate adoptive homes for special needs children.

5. Adoption assistance (subsidy).—In the past 13 years, 49 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands have passed legislation which permits subsidized adoption. Adoption subsidy is a program which provides financial support to the child beyond legal consummation of adoption. It should be emphasized, however, that a subsidy program is intended neither to supplant community efforts to recruit adoptive homes without subsidy nor to be a substitute for other resources in the community. However, without subsidy, many children would not know the warmth and stability of a permanent family. Many children have handicapping conditions—such as Down's Syndrome, leukemia, or chronic heart conditions—that will require substantial medical treatment and other supportive services. Adoption subsidy programs are one way of assisting adoptive families to meet these heavy expenses.

6. Adoption information resource exchange system.—Since the early 1960's adoption exchanges have been viewed as viable vehicles for local agencies to find homes for waiting children. Most adoption exchanges provide "matching services" which register and try to unite children waiting for permanent homes with those seeking to adopt. Some operate "picture listings" which make photographs and descriptions of waiting children available to the public. And an increasing number go beyond the listing to active involvement in publicity, training, and advocacy. The specific services may vary, but all have the same purpose: to help local agencies find permanent homes for waiting children.

At the national level, the Department of Health and Human Services supports a national adoption exchange which provides matching and referral services and greater exposure for children with the most exceptional needs. This exchange, however, is only part of a larger effort. It is intended to supplement rather than replace State and local efforts. State and local adoption placement services are still the best and most effective primary means of finding good adoptive placements for children. The overall goal of the Department's activities is to assist in the establishment of a coordinated network among local, State, and regional exchanges, through technical assistance and transfer of technology.

These are some of the programs which respond to the major issues in adoption in America today. These are the types of activities we will continue to work on in collaboration with public and voluntary agencies throughout the country.

An additional topic I would like to address today concerns the issues related to adoption and adolescent pregnancy.

Adoption should be recognized as a positive choice for pregnant adolescents.

According to recent studies, only a very small percentage of teenage girls now choose adoption for their child. Ten years ago, 9 out of 10 young women giving birth out of wedlock chose to give their baby up for adoption. Today these statistics are reversed and 9 out of 10 teenage mothers choose to keep their babies.

One theory for this change is that many of those single pregnant women who would have chosen adoption in earlier years now choose abortion. Another is that the stigma of single parenthood has lessened and pressure from peers and parents is on the side of keeping the child. In addition, a recent study by the Rand Corporation reveals that most teenage mothers who keep their babies shun adoption as "an unmerited punishment for the baby." Pressure by society and social work professionals no longer prods unmarried teenagers to place their children for adoption.

A number of factors in addition to peer pressure and societal attitude will determine the choice that is made. The attitude the young mother has about adoption, her knowledge of parenting skills and child development, the support available to her if she decides to parent, and the goals she has for herself and her child are all ingredients in her final decision.

It would be helpful if young men and women have an opportunity to explore their attitudes and obtain knowledge about parenting, children and family life before the

pregnancy occurs. Education provided by communities at the local level for parenthood and child development may motivate some adolescents to postpone parenting and assist those who do become pregnant to make informed decisions about their own future and that of their child.

There is a current need for a better understanding of adoption and its possibilities without returning to the 1950's practice of pressuring a young woman to relinquish her child. It is certainly in the best interest of all concerned that such a choice be made carefully and with an adequate exploration of the facts and their implication for the future. A young woman's decision to relinquish or keep her child is a complex one which requires sensitive consideration.

An example of how one adolescent pregnancy program counsels young women in this area illustrates the type of support that is necessary to help young mothers make an informed decision. The social worker who counsels young women in a residential setting stresses the need for preparation and support. She works in small support groups, encouraging the girls to come to an understanding of why they became pregnant and to face whether their needs, which are valid, will be met by early motherhood. She also works closely with the girl's parents, who are very influential in her choice to parent or make an adoption plan for her child.

When a girl has decided on adoption, the social worker prepares her, through counseling, to live with the painful feelings and after effects. She is encouraged to express her feelings for her baby in the hospital, rather than denying the existence of feelings, and to derive strength from the thought that she loves her baby and wants the best life for it. It is during her hospitalization that she most needs the support of her family and friends in reconciling her decision.

Following release from the hospital, she often goes through a period of grieving similar to that of a mother who has lost a baby through death. This grieving period usually lasts about one year. The program conducts support groups that meet weekly for a six-week period, then monthly for the rest of the year. The director of this program also is planning to use some of the same counseling techniques with young women in a nonresidential setting.

Clearly, the adoption choice for teenagers today is a difficult one. But sensitive and supportive counseling should be available and can go a long way toward helping them to make informed choices in the midst of current pressures. In any case, adequate follow up and support is necessary regardless of whether their choice is to parent or make an adoption plan for their child.

The following comments are in response to the provisions of S. 989, a bill "To amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978 to provide for a national computerized adoption identification center, and for other purposes."

The bill provides for the establishment of a voluntary adoption identification system, through which biological parents and adoptees, and biological siblings and other biological relatives of adoptees may locate each other through a centralized network. This voluntary adoption identification demonstration program would receive applications for adoptees, biological parents and other biological relatives over the age of 21 years who wish to locate each other. The program would attempt to match the related applicants with each other and carry out followup activities established by the Department. The information collected would be retained up to 10 years in nationwide computerized information system. A fee for service would be established for all services provided under this program. The bill also provides authorization to operate a statewide adoption identification computer system in a state which chooses to participate and agrees to certain specified conditions relative to coordination, financial participation and standards. The program would be authorized for 3 years with an appropriation of $1 million for fiscal year 1982 and such sums as necessary for each of the succeeding two years.

We oppose the enactment of S. 989.

This legislation would create a new narrow Federal categorical program. The Administration believes that the most effective delivery of services is through the block grant approach.

In addition, we see significant potential problems in the operation of the proposed system. In order for a successful "match" to be made, the adoptee and the biological relative, unknown to each other, would both have to voluntarily sign up with the identification system. The volume of requests would have to be extremely high for the chances of this happening to be good. While there may be a large number of adoptees seeking biological relatives, the number of biological parents seeking children given up for adoption is likely to be comparatively low, depending on the circumstances under which the child was given up for adoption in the first place.

We also see problems in obtaining access to the information necessary to make a match for applicants, or, if information is obtained, in breaching confidentiality of

information. Given the sensitivity of this type of information, we do not think it would be advisable to retain the data for ten years in a national computerized system.

Finally, there does not appear to be any clear justification for a Federal role in the establishment of a national computerized adoption identification center. If there is sufficient real interest as reflected by demand for such a service, it could be wholly established and operated by the private sector without a new law or a new Federal program. A number of private organizations are currently assisting adoptees in locating their natural parents. Private profit or nonprofit organizations can provide such services on a fee for service basis. The fee for service requirement under S. 989 could probably be most efficiently and effectively administered under private auspices without the burden of Federal rules and reporting requirements. A further conclusion of the Department is that the need for a computerized adoption identification program is far less critical to children and families than other national needs in the area of adoption that were discussed in the earlier part of my statement. During this period of acute fiscal restraint, we cannot conclude that limited Federal funds should be made available for such an activity.

For the foregoing reasons, we are opposed to the enactment of S. 989.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have in this matter.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Mr. Master. In asking questions, I am sure it will be satisfactory to you and desirable to me if Mrs. Mecklenburg would be permitted to comment as she desires.

It is my understanding that the Department has placed emphasis recently on the adoption of older children, which had become a needed emphasis. Is it possible that we have, due to the relatively short supply of younger infants with the increase in abortion—do you have the suasion that you would also make a priority of infant adoption as an option? I think that you implied in your testimony that you would.

Would you make infant adoption a priority? Is that something that you could respond to affirmatively?

Mr. MASTER. Yes. I would just add I am not an expert on adoption, but my understanding is that the special needs youngsters, in particular, are generally not infants; they generally are older individuals with other handicapping conditions. I gather that there does not seem to be a major problem in moving infants out of the system.

Senator DENTON. Does the Administration on Children, Youth and Families have staff who are considered specialists in the area of infant adoption?

Mr. MASTER. We have an adoption specialist in the Children's Bureau. We do not have a further subspecialization in infant adoption.

Senator DENTON. Can you estimate what portion of current program funds are directed toward encouraging young pregnant women to consider adoption, recognizing that the choice as to keeping the child or putting it up for adoption is a sensitive one?

Mr. MASTER. I do not believe our information systems can give us that fine a level of information. We estimate that in the Department's programs that deal directly with adoption services through one form or another—through the Child Welfare Services program, the adoption assistance, and to a lesser extent the title XX program—tens of millions of dollars are spent by States.

Unfortunately, the information systems we have in each of these programs do not break out the information more finely. In the title XX program, we estimate that roughly $30 million is spent in the

area of adoption services, but we cannot pinpoint how much of that money is devoted to working with teenage parents.

Senator DENTON. The child abuse disaster area was studied by me as a member of the Alabama Commission on Children and the Family. It was so self-evident from the study that children born casually were almost certain, in the topsy-turvy relations which would so frequently be undertaken by the unwed mother—and I do not mean to insult unwed mothers—but the general results that would take place after the conception and keeping of a child at 13 or 14 and then the taking on of a spouse later, who resented the child, seemed to be one of the most flagrant causes of the child-abuse problem.

Yet, it was being treated as something where the Government had to get more and more into explaining to the man and the woman why a child should not be abused. Do you feel that maybe we are attacking the problem at the wrong place and that we ought to start, as you said, discussing with the young lady that the best thing to do about sexual relations is avoid pregnancy and venereal disease?

Indeed, venereal disease was disease No. 1, and pregnancy was disease No. 2 in much of the literature put out by agencies which do receive a great deal of money from the Government.

One would think that it is so obvious—the forest for the trees—that one should start concentrating, from a Government point of view, if we are going to intrude into that area—and it is a national problem—on the infinite importance of human life.

Where do we get this choice business, not only in terms of abortion but in terms of exercising the choice to commit an act which we did not earn? We did not get this proclivity for the sharing in procreation by something we did ourselves. It is just as if we did not earn the appetitite for food by which we sustain our lives.

It seems to me—and I say this to you because you are in such key positions in this matter—that we really are blind to the real causes and in a pathetic situation of sophistry with regard to our posture in governmental intervention. I say this for the record as well as for whatever comment you care to make.

Mr. MASTER. I do not have any direct comment other than that much of our effort in the child abuse and neglect areas will be on prevention; it is now and will continue to be on prevention. I think it would embrace some of the concerns that you just addressed.

Marjorie, would you care to add to that.

Mrs. MECKLENBURG. Yes.

Senator, I want you to know that I personally appreciate your commitment to promoting responsible sexuality and parenthood, and reviving infant adoption as a choice and involving parents and families of teenagers, and also at the same time, you are encouraging the provision of care to pregnant teenagers and their families.

I think most of us can agree that once a teenager is pregnant, she and her child and the family need really careful and special care so that the outcome of the pregnancy and the future that follows for the girl and the child will be better than it would have been if we had not been there.

But beyond that, it seems to me that the best situation we could hope for is to avoid that from happening in the first place. There really are no good answers once you are pregnant and a teenager and single and immature; you can only make the best of a bad situation.

Senator DENTON. I thoroughly agree and thank you for the comment, Mrs. Mecklenburg. I guess it is just the manner in which we talk about prevention; you know, from what I have seen, there has been too much "go ahead and get with it; just be responsible with the contraceptives."

I really think that that is, aside from one's moral beliefs, flying in the face of historical experience regarding that which is effective and not effective. In other words, if you do not have societal peer pressure which the Government supports toward encouraging the young to withhold until marriage, or trying to withhold until marriage the full indulgence of their sexual appetites, I do not think you are going to have anything.

To make fun of that idea, which seems to be among the fun and games undertaken in the media today, seems to me most unfortunate for the likelihood that we are going to regain a commonsense attitude in that respect. I will just leave that as a unilateral remark.

It is my understanding that HHS has kept no national statistics on adoption since 1975. In Public Law 95-266, the establishment of a national data system is required. Could you tell me the status of this operation? Are there any statistics available now, and how much money has been used to establish this system and how much more is obligated to do so?

Mr. MASTER. We have a number of current projects underway in the information systems area, generally. The big problem, which I think you will hear later today in some of the subsequent testimony, is working with States in establishing their own systems. We are pursuing that now.

Our projection is that during fiscal 1982, we should be moving those systems to a kind of transfer stage, working with the States so that they can put their own systems on line.

Senator DENTON. You have described many of the activities in which ACYF has been engaged in promoting the adoption of children in foster care and institutions. You have not mentioned the finalization of a Model State Adoption Act, which is required in Public Law 95-266.

It is my understanding that this controversial proposed document is under review to be sure that the final document is limited to eliminating barriers to adoption of children in foster care and institutions. Is that correct?

Mr. MASTER. I guess there are two parts. I believe it is correct that the document is being finalized now and should be ready for approval by the Secretary imminently. There is a major focus on special needs children, as you indicated.

Senator DENTON. It is my hope—and I know it is a source of great concern to many of my colleagues, including Senators Hatch and Humphrey and members of this subcommittee that the final HHS version of the Model State Adoption Act is not limited only to the issue of special needs children.

I do not wish to minimize the fact that we have to emphasize that area, but a number of informed people have indicated that there is too much delimitation to that particular area and to that issue, and that there are no provisions relating to opening up adoption records, the rights of fathers to their infant children, or the relinquishment procedures for young women placing their babies for adoption.

These issues were not dealt with in a reasonable manner in the proposed version of the act published last year. I would hope you would relate to the Secretary our hope that the final Model Act is not devoted to the issues of special needs adoptions only.

Does the administration favor some form of tax relief for adoptive parents, and if so, can you describe the means that the administration would prefer to use in giving that tax relief?

Mr. MASTER. I understand that there are roughly 10 proposals right now being reviewed by the administration; 8 that were initiated in the House and 2 in the Senate. Those are currently under review. We would be glad to report back on the administration's position.

Senator DENTON. Does the administration have an established position on the question of transracial adoption?

Mr. MASTER. Well, again, I think there are two parts. One is that I am not sure the administration feels it is required to have a position in this area, inasmuch as the policy decisions in the context of the new Federal role would be made by States, localities, private agencies, et cetera.

Our primary emphasis is on the adoption of special needs youngsters.

Senator DENTON. Well, I say this out of personal familiarity with a program which involves encouragement of adoption, or at least citizenship with adoption of children fathered overseas by American servicemen, for example, and other Americans, presumably.

Do you have any position or awareness of that, and what is your personal, and if you can say so, the administration's attitude toward that particular area?

Mr. MASTER. I do not have any information on the administration position, but I would be glad to get back to you on that.

Senator DENTON. Of course, the issue concerns Korea and Vietnam in particular. We have tens of thousands, and perhaps more, half-American children over there. I realize we have got to look at the needs of children in our own country first, and that would involve transracial adoptions, but there are many people within the United States who might wish to adopt a child.

Activities under Public Law 95-266 have been proposed for inclusion in a social services block grant. Specifically, adoption opportunities have been retained for discretionary funds which will retain a national focus.

Do you think that there is a need for this national focus on adoption opportunities, and how do you think such a program will fare within that discretionary fund?

Mr. MASTER. Well, as the Acting Commissioner who will be making those proposals to the Assistant Secretary, in effect, in competition for scarce discretionary resources, I think it will fare rather well. This is a priority with the Department and with the

Agency, and testimony you will hear later today, I think, will attest to that.

Senator DENTON. If I may turn to Mrs. Mecklenburg, I first want to acknowledge and express my appreciation and gratitude for the help you have given us—counsel and support in the field of adolescent pregnancy.

Can you discuss for a moment your vision for the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy in the coming years, and is there a continuing need for a program like this one?

Mrs. MECKLENBURG. Well, as you know, the Secretary has had a longstanding interest in adolescent pregnancy. He has been involved in many kinds of efforts that address this problem.

I would not have come to work in Washington and disrupted my family life if I felt the Secretary did not have this commitment. So, no matter what the legislative outcome—as you know, it is uncertain what the legislative outcome for this particular office will be, but I feel that no matter what the outcome, the Secretary's interest will continue and that there will be a need for continuing leadership and priority—setting and coordination of the many efforts that address this problem now going on in various parts of the Department.

Senator DENTON. Do you know of ways that current programs might more effectively promote or provide adoption services?

Mrs. MECKLENBURG. I am not an expert on adoption, but one of the things I have certainly observed in the adolescent pregnancy area is that the counseling that is received by the adolescent and her family when they are making choices is extremely important, and that we need to look into the kinds of skills there are, the kinds of information presented, and the kinds of options given to young people.

Another area which is important is that there seems to be a great deal of misinformation about adoption as an option or choice by young people and their families. Evidence shows us that there is great peer pressure and sometimes great parental pressure to reject adoption and to make the best of the situation and raise the child.

This is all right if it is an informed decision and if there is really careful thinking about the options that are available. It looks, from some of the studies that have been done, that there is really very little weighing of information. The decision to relinquish or to raise a family is sometimes made in a very fast manner, and there may even be a guilt factor in making the best of the situation and not really thinking through carefully what would be best for the young person or the child.

I think that we need to look through all of the programs that touch the adoption area to see the kind of counseling and support system available, and to make sure that informed choices are being made.

Another area that concerns me is that in some cases there are many services available for young people who keep a child and raise a child, but very little available for young people who choose adoption. And we need to recognize that that choice carries with it a great deal of pain and grieving and that there has to be some support system after the decision is made for quite a period of

time—at least a year—to help them come to grips with the loss that they feel and to be able to reorient them back into the role that they have chosen, which is not parenting at this time in their lives.

Senator DENTON. Your office has the responsibility under the current law to provide a role in coordinating other Federal programs concerned about adolescent pregnancy. Could you discuss what has been done and what your plans are for fulfilling the role?

Mrs. MECKLENBURG. As you know, Senator Denton, I have been here but a short time, and everyone's program and future program is a bit up in the air at this moment. So, the efforts that we are making since I have arrived are to open up channels of communication.

We have a meeting, in fact, scheduled in the first week of August with bureau representatives who have an interest in adolescent pregnancy. The purpose of that meeting is just to see what we could do together, what kinds of interests we have in common, and what the present state of affairs is as far as cooperation between bureaus.

No one in these bureaus is forced to cooperate or to amend whatever they do as a result of any decisions made; it is purely a voluntary kind of function. So, even though the Congress is interested in coordination and cooperation, the only leverage that I have as a program director is to encourage people to meet and cooperate and see where their interests coincide, and to try to bring together what could be a fragmented activity.

So, we are working toward that, and will continue to do that.

Senator DENTON. Does the administration favor the concept of S. 1090, the adolescent family life bill?

Mr. MASTER. If I am not mistaken, you received a communication from OMB back in July. Again, my understanding of that is that that is not inconsistent with the health services block, if that were the way it was considered.

Again, the administration position, as I understand it, on that bill is to look at it not as a categorical program but as part of a larger constellation of services.

Senator DENTON. You know, we are still in July and we did just get that letter a few days ago, but I would ask you to read it again. It does not state it quite that way. It is a demonstration project; it is not a block grant, but it is part of an older adolescent pregnancy program, from which we took $30 million and might get $15 million for that demonstration project.

I wish the letter were here so that we could read it to you, sir, because I do not want a great deal of ambiguity about OMB's position or the Secretary's position on that bill.

Mr. MASTER. I would be glad to get back to you very quickly with a clarification.

Senator DENTON. We will submit that letter in the record at this point.

[The following was received for the record:]

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET,
Washington, D.C., July 18, 1981.

Hon. Jeremiah Denton,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR DENTON: Earlier, you had inquired abut the Aministration's views on incorporation of the matter contained in S. 1090 into the Omnibus Reconciliation Act.

The Administration would not oppose incorporation of this matter into reconciliation. The authorization level provided by the bill, in light of subsequent action on the Preventive Health Services Block Grant, is not inconsistent with the President's budget.

Thank your for this opportuity to comment on your proposed legislation.

With all best wishes, I remain

Yours very truly,

DONALD W. MORAN,
Associate Director for Human Resources, Veterans and Labor.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET,
Washington, D.C., August 5, 1981.

Hon. ORRIN G. HATCH,
Chairman, Committee on Labor and Human Resources,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This is in response to your request for the views of this Office on S. 989, a bill "To amend the Child Abuse Preventio s and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978 to provide for a national computerized adoption identification center, and for other purposes."

In testimony before the Subcommittee on Aging, Family, and Human Services on July 23, 1981, the Department of Health and Human Services explained the Administration's reasons for opposing the enactment of S. 989.

We concur with the views expressed in the HHS testimony, and accordingly, oppose enactment of S. 989.

Sincerely,

JAMES M. FREY,
Assistant Director for Legislative Reference.

Senator DENTON. That concludes my questions, and thank you very much for coming.

Mr. MASTER. Thank you.

Senator DENTON. Father Clements, would you come forward?

We have called now as our next witness Father George Clements of the Holy Angel Catholic Church in Chicago, and his adopted son, Joseph. I read about Father Clements in the newspaper, and, to say the least, I admire what he is about, in addition to his priestly role.

So, I am very pleased to welcome you this morning, Father Clements. I believe that Father Clements, as an educator, is teaching the young people at Holy Angel Catholic Church School. He is teaching them the value of high academic standards, discipline and self-respect, all of which are essential if young people are to succeed.

But he is doing much more to support children. He has launched a nationwide campaign to provide homes for 100,000 black children who are homeless. He is a man who believes in practicing what he preaches as a minister.

Earlier this month, Father Clements became the adopted father of Joey, who previously had been living in an orphanage. Both Father Clements and Joseph Clements are with us today. I have never seen a finer young man than you, Joseph.

From what I have read about Father Clements, he and I agree on many things. For example, in the Washington Post in March of this year, he offered an explanation for why there were fewer homeless black children in our country before World War II.

> The reason: the extended family concept. The community or friends or relatives always took these children in. Nobody thought about demanding that the Government do it. We have to get back to the 1920s and 1930s and get that attitude back. I think it is as important for middle-class blacks as it is for the children themselves.

I look forward to hearing Father Clements' ideas. I am very honored that he has agreed to meet with the subcommittee today and share with us and with many Americans, hopefully, through the reports on this, his and Joey's happy story about adoption.

STATEMENT OF REV. GEORGE CLEMENTS, HOLY ANGEL CHURCH, CHICAGO, ILL.; ACCOMPANIED BY JOSEPH CLEMENTS

Father Clements. Thank you very much, Senator Denton, and good morning. I certainly know I am speaking for Joey, too, when I say that we appreciate very much this opportunity to be here this morning.

I do have prepared testimony which I have already submitted to your office, and I would rather speak from my heart rather than from a prepared statement, if that is proper.

I do feel very strongly that we must go back to the position that we held in this Nation prior to the Second World War when we black people took care of our own homeless children.

It has been estimated that white Americans must wait 2, 3, sometimes 4 years to adopt a white infant, and it is my hope that the day will arrive when black Americans will be in that same position.

I think that the problem is quite simple; it is that black America has been convinced that it is the obligation of the Federal Government of the United States to take care of homeless children, or in lieu of that, certainly the States. I do not feel that that is where the focus should be. I feel the focus should be on black America itself and on our black communities themselves.

I am very hopeful that if the Government did anything, what it would do is wage a campaign throughout our black communities to convince black Americans of their responsibility in this regard.

I also feel that the strongest influence within the black community is the black church. Certainly, they are the ones that have the strongest trust factor, and it is my hope that we could utilize the churches in the black community to get across this concept.

I have tried to initiate a campaign that is called "One Church-One Child," and all that we would be asking is that a particular congregation would be convinced by its minister that at least one member of that congregation would adopt a homeless child. And if we were to do that in the various black communities around this Nation, we could certainly wipe this problem out.

This could be done without any governmental funding, without any foundation support, and even without any meetings or any kind of gatherings, and so forth. This could be done simply because there would be people themselves who would be interested.

Finally, I would like to speak about my own State, the State of Illinois. I have been very pleased at what has been developing in

the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, under the leadership of its present director, Gregory Coler, because they have definitely taken a leadership role in this entire matter, and they have initiated several programs that have revised a lot of these guidelines and have given a new sense of self-respect to people who were going to adopt.

In the past, Senator—I do not know how many people understand this—but there were a lot of people who would hold their noses up, and so forth, at people who were interested in adopting. Thankfully, in Illinois, that kind of situation has ceased.

Further and finally, in Illinois we have had a very highly computerized system that has been developed by Hardy Dorcas, and this system, I understand, is being transferred into other States as well. And I certainly applaud any efforts to bring modern technology in in order to try and do something about this terrible problem.

I understand that my son had a few things he wanted to say, too, if we could allow him to. If we could allow him to get his in, I would appreciate it.

Senator DENTON. Joseph, there is no one more important that we could hear from.

Master CLEMENTS. Thank you.

Children should not have to wait for years in institutions and grow up there because of their parents not being able to take care of them. Illinois has just passed new laws that protect parents' rights to the kids. Kids have rights, too, and particularly the right to have a family.

Less evidence is now needed to free a child for adoption, and if a parent does not visit the child for a year, the child can be adopted.

Senator DENTON. Excuse me, son. What you are saying is so interesting, would you put that microphone a little closer to your mouth?

Master CLEMENTS. The new laws put more responsibility on the parent to be a parent, or allow the child to be adopted. When children have been neglected or abandoned, the courts mostly look at the parents' rights. The kids who have the most rights in juvenile courts are the delinquent kids.

The law has recently changed in Illinois to give the children in foster care or institutions more rights. If their parents do not visit them for a year, they can be freed for adoption and have a new family. Also, it will not be as hard to free a child for adoption. If the attempt is in favor of adoption, the child can be adopted; the burden of proof is going to be on the parents.

Speaking for the little people of the world, I am very grateful and I am hoping that this campaign can go through and be very successful.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Father Clements follows:]

STATEMENT OF FATHER GEORGE CLEMENTS

MINORITY ADOPTIONS

I wish to thank the members of this committee for presenting me with the opportunity to speak today on the subject of adoption which is of vital importance and interest to this nation. In October of 1980, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a study entitled, Adoption Services In the States, wherein it is estimated that about 502,000 children are currently in foster care and that

nearly 215,000 of them might benefit from adoption services. A large percentage of these children are older, some are handicapped and a significant number are members of racial minorities.

In the recent past, adoption was most commonly seen as the movement of white, healthy infants into the homes of childless couples who were interested in building families. Older and handicapped children as well as minority infants were seen as "unadoptable" or "hard-to-place" due often to worker or agency attitudes and not particularly to any problem that the child evidenced or displayed. During the past decade the child welfare field and child advocacy organizations have taken great strides to emphasize permanent planning and to encourage the rapid movement of children, otherwise seen as unadoptable, out of the foster care system and into adoptive families. The struggle, however, is far from over as witnessed from the statistics quoted at the beginning of this testimony. Many public and private child welfare agencies are still far from establishing programs that truly meet the needs of today's waiting children. Black children of all ages continue to be locked into situations where permanent planning for their futures is poorly monitored or in many cases non-existent. Handicapped children continue to be seen as children who will be institutionalized for their remaining days while agency personnel decide whether or not a potential family exists for this type of a child. Children 10 years of age and above continue to be recognized as the most difficult children to place in adoptive homes and more importantly to keep in adoptive homes once they are found. Although I recognize that all these types of waiting children have special needs, I would like to limit my comments to the barriers and possible solutions I see to the problems of placing minority children in adoptive homes today.

I think that to a certain extent one of the largest barriers to minority adoptions has been the attitude of government that has stated that adoptions are their responsibility and not that of minority communities. While it is true that Federal dollars are desperately needed to place minority children, the overwhelming responsbility to increase minority adoptions falls within and among the members of these minority communities. Because I am a member of the Black community, I have seen the need to make my people aware of the many Black children in the country who need homes. More and more people in the black community must become sensitive to the needs of black children and to the barriers that prevent our children from reaching adoptive families. Leaders of all black communities must recognize the problem I speak of today and they must do all that is possible to encourage the adoptions of waiting black children. Government can only do so much to solve this nationwide problem—our people must do the rest.

Some public and private agencies have already begun to tackle this enormous problem with a good deal of success. Since I am from Illinois, I would like to comment briefly on many of the positive steps already taken in the area of minority adoptions by Gregory L. Coler who is Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. In any large public child welfare system, solutions to problems come about because of leadership that begins at the top and filters through the ranks of the entire Department. Director Coler has taken this leadership role himself by emphasizing and encouraging black adoptions, by instructing his administrative staff that special needs adoption is a number one priority, and by holding staff accountable for performance related to the quality and quantity of adoptions undertaken in the State of Illinois.

In a little over one year this large public child welfare system undertook a complete analysis of its entire adoption program. It revised its outdated adoption policies and procedures and designed and implemented a model program aimed at better delivery of adoption services on a statewide basis.

During the 1981 session of the Illinois General Assembly, the legislature also assisted this Department in its goal to drastically increase the number of special needs adoptions. Increased budget allocations were approved and new adoption staff were added to the Department so that this initiative could be supported and sustained. Of 68 new staff members hired for this specialized work, a total of eleven are attorneys who will concentrate their efforts on the termination of parental rights. Coupled with these increases the Department worked long and hard to design and implement a complete case review system that will regularly review the permanent plans of all children who must enter the child welfare system. A computerized case tracking and case inventory system has also been planned and started as this Department shows its determination to break down the barriers that have kept children out of permanent homes.

Together with a strong private agency thrust, this State has come a long way in helping to emphasize the needs of minority children. Intensive public education and recruitment campaigns have been initiated in minority communities. These families and single parents have been made aware of the fact that age, religion, race,

occupation, marital status, fertility and socio-economic status are traditional requirements that are being questioned, challenged and in many cases eliminated from the adoptive recruitment process. In the City of Chicago a specialized adoptive recruitment staff, consisting entirely of minority staff members, is assigned to "reach out" and attract black families who might be interested in adoption. This staff utilizes media presentations in two Chicago newspapers, one of which is the Chicago Defender, a black publication, and the Chicago Sun-Times, to feature black children who are awaiting adoptive homes. Both series have already featured many black children who have found adoptive homes as a result of the efforts of these newspapers. Television and radio stations have also been extremely helpful in utilizing media presentations to publicize the issues and to present waiting children to the public. Black applicants are made aware of the fact that they can adopt even if they have other children, if they live in an apartment and even if they earn a modest income. A liberal adoption subsidy program is available in Illinois to emphasize these changes and the State's desire to find families for all waiting minority children.

This past February, the Department again showed its interest in "special needs adoption" when it opened the Adoption Information Center of Illinois in cooperation with the Child Care Association of Illinois. This program includes an adoption photo listing service, a publicity component and a toll free 800 telephone number that Illinois residents may call for general or specific adoption information. Since its inception the Adoption Information Center has witnessed an increase of telephone calls that has doubled and in some cases tripled the number of inquiries from people seeking adoption information on children with special needs.

On November 20, 1980, I initiated a campaign of One Church—One Child in an attempt to increase the number of potential black parents who would be interested in adoption. Over 150 parishoners attended our program where the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services showed in color slides of 21 black children who needed adoptive parents. To give you an idea of how successful a program of this type can be let me share with you the results of such an effort:

17 families made their intentions to adopt known to Children and Family Services staff.

Three of these families eventually adopted black children awaiting adoption.

21 children were featured that evening and of that number 11 have already been placed for adoption.

Because of the success of this program, I contacted other black clergy in Chicago in order to expand the program that is now being publicized throughout the United States. In Chicago we now have 18 black churches that are interested in the One Church-One Child program that was so successful at my parish. Meetings are now being planned at those churches to encourage members of those congregations to come forward and adopt a waiting black child.

The ideal aspects of this type of program are as follows: It does not require government funding to initiate; it does not require a staff to implement the program; and committees do not have to be formed to organize and direct the program.

The program only requires a request from a black minister to his or her congregation that one member of their church adopt a waiting black child. I believe that this request alone will be a powerful force that will demonstrate that our black churches are institutions that can bring about changes needed in our communities.

What has all of this meant for the minority children who are waiting for adoption in Illinois? In February of 1980, there were 75 healthy, black infants waiting for adoptive families in Chicago. I am happy to say that because of the programs I have described for you, all of those children have been placed for adoption. Since 1978 the total number of Illinois adoptions decreased steadily. However, in the last fiscal year ending June 30, 1981, the number of adoptive placements increased thereby reversing the downward trend that had been customary prior to the program changes instituted in the last twenty months. Again in the City of Chicago where black adoptions are actively encouraged, there are over twenty licensed and approved black singles and families waiting to adopt a child.

In spite of these massive efforts the number of minority children in Illinois continues to present a challenge to the adoption staffs of public and private agencies. I am confident that Illinois will continue to increase the number of adoptions of minority children who are waiting for families. However, if we are going to solve this nationwide problem, all of our States, all of our private adoption agencies and our Federal government must be committed to the placement of minority children. The types of programs undertaken by Illinois and other states must become a reality everywhere if we are going to solve this nationwide problem of children who are awaiting adoptive families.

Before concluding I would like to again reemphasize the fact that black children are the responsibility of the black community. We must encourage the continuation of black culture and heritage through our concept of the extended family which over time has helped to care for our children.

Again I thank you for your invitation and the opportunity to share with you my concerns about the adoptions of minority children in America.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Joseph and Father Clements.

Father Clements, in speaking from his heart, generalized about his encouragement of what is happening in Illinois for the record and for the people here today. I want to quote from something we have in our memorandum which originated with Father Clements regarding the remarkable success of his program, one church-one child, because I am firmly convinced that it is the human heart and not the Government which is the key to the success of so many compassionate programs which the Government has undertaken in view of the forfeiture of the consciousness of the human heart.

On November 20, 1980, I initiated a campaign of One Church-One Child in an attempt to increase the number of potential black parents who would be interested in adoption. Over 150 parishioners attended our program, where the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services showed color slides of 21 black children who needed adopted parents.

To give you an idea of how successful a program of this type can be, let me share with you the results of such an effort. Seventeen families made their intentions to adopt known to Children and Family Services staff. Three of these families eventually adopted black children awaiting adoption. Twenty-one children were featured that evening, and of that number, eleven have already been placed for adoption.

Without going further, those results were obtained on a one-shot basis with 150 parishioners. I say that that is perhaps a million times more effective than a governmental approach. And I gather it did not cost a lot of money, Father.

Father CLEMENTS. No, just the money for the electricity in the church.

Senator DENTON. Do you believe that the work that you and others have done in Illinois can be duplicated in other States?

Father CLEMENTS. I firmly believe that it can be duplicated, and I know that there are a lot of people who stand waiting to help around the country.

Senator DENTON. What did all the programs started by Director Coler, including all the subsidies, personnel, and computerized tracking, cost?

Father CLEMENTS. I do not have that information. I do not know how much they cost.

Senator DENTON. All those funds were obtained from private sources, is that correct?

Father CLEMENTS. Yes, they were all obtained from private sources.

Senator DENTON. With your experience, would you favor proposals for tax relief to adoptive families?

Father CLEMENTS. I would favor proposals for tax relief, yes, because I feel that this would be an incentive to parents to adopt. Certainly, in my own situation, I think that if I got a little tax relief, it would help me with Joey.

Senator DENTON. You commented about the minority workers and minority children, which I read as black children and black

families. You also speak about the need to encourage the continuation of black culture and heritage.

Do you believe that Anglo parents are unable to encourage the continuation of any culture and heritage other than their own and that they cannot therefore continue the culture and heritage of Hispanic or Korean or Indian children?

I ask this because I am concerned about the tradeoffs for those children between a home now for every waiting black infant, some of those homes will not be with black parents, for the acknowledged value of continuation of the black heritage and culture.

Father CLEMENTS. I believe that it is dangerous to generalize when you are talking about something such as black culture and heritage, and I should say anybody's culture and heritage, because there are some people who, for example, think they are deeply steeped in the Irish culture and heritage, and yet they would not be able to transfer the legitimate Irish culture and heritage because they do not really know what it is.

So, I would not generalize about that. I do feel that it is best not to put barriers in front of children who are going to have difficult adjustments to make anyway, and it certainly is best not to throw an additional one in of race or nationality, and so forth.

I would prefer that a Lithuanian child would have a Lithuanian couple as its adoptive parents. But you cannot always have the ideal, and in lieu of the ideal, certainly, I would opt for an Anglo couple, or whatever nationality, taking a child in rather than having that child languish in an institution.

Senator DENTON. Other than the invitation to this hearing, have you had any overtures from Government that might convince you that perhaps there might be some sort of Government piggyback on this thing; in other words, instead of starting their own program out of the minds of bureaucrats who happen to find themselves in positions—and I do not mean to denigrate bureaucrats—but rather to help spread the idea that you have had and perhaps support it to some degree financially or bureaucratically? Have you had any contact?

Father CLEMENTS. Senator, yours is the first contact that has ever been made to me concerning this question. And, again, I thank you for having contacted me, but no one else in the Federal Government has.

Senator DENTON. Well, it was on my initiative, Father, that we asked you here, and so you can be confident that to the degree that I can sway this subcommittee and committee—and I accept their goodwill and I believe they will be swayable and persuaded—we will do all we can to help you and to help the cause that you have furthered so admirably.

I would like to thank you and Joseph for being with us this morning. You remind me of the great and compassionate work of Father Flanagan in the 1920's with his boys' home. You are proving that he is not heavy; he is my brother.

Father CLEMENTS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator DENTON. Thank you.

Father CLEMENTS. Thank you very much.

Senator DENTON. Our second group of panelists will be Laurie Flynn, executive director of the North American Council on Adopt-

able Children, and Mr. Don Harris, executive director of Beech Brook in Pepper Pike, Ohio. Both of these very dedicated people have had a great amount of experience in the area of placing handicapped, older and minority children.

I welcome both of you, and thank you for joining us on such short notice. Would you care to make statements?

Mr. HARRIS. Do you have any preference in order, Senator?

Senator DENTON. I do not know whether to go age before beauty, or ladies first.

Mr. HARRIS. No, no; I prefer ladies first, and I support the second statement.

Senator DENTON. All right. Mrs. Flynn?

STATEMENT OF LAURIE M. FLYNN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NORTH AMERICAN COUNCIL ON ADOPTABLE CHILDREN, INC.; AND DON M. HARRIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BEECH BROOK, PEPPER PIKE, OHIO

Mrs. FLYNN. Thank you. I very much appreciate the invitation to testify today before the subcommittee and share the concern of the members of the North American Council on Adoptable Children.

Our organization is a coordinating body for over 400 local, volunteer adoptive parent groups all across the United States. Our members have formed local and State groups because of their concern about adoption and because of their belief that every child has the right to a permanent family.

As parents who have adopted children with special needs, we are convinced that no child is unadoptable. We share a strong belief in the rightness of adoption, and therefore have been catalysts for much needed reform and innovation in adoption practice and policy.

Our organization was founded in 1974 as a grassroots, citizen-based effort, and we have worked through local volunteers almost exclusively in three major areas of need: public education about adoption and recruitment of families for children without homes; provision of supportive services at the local level for families who adopt hard to place children; and citizen advocacy to remove the barriers to the placement of children who have too often been ignored by our child welfare system.

As our organization has grown, we have taken on the concern for the larger number of children, considered to be perhaps as many as 200,000, who are currently legally available for adoption but have not yet found families.

Through these local volunteers, we share our concern and our experiences with decisionmakers in agencies and courts, and with legislators, and we seek opportunities to work in partnership with child welfare professionals and others.

I would like to share with you, as an adoptive parent as well—I am the mother of 12 children, so I have considerable personal experience with adoption. Five of my children were born to my husband and myself, and we adopted seven. All seven of those children, Senator, were considered to have some sort of special need—a problem or a condition—which made them less likely to be placed.

We have seen what adoption can do for these children. Two of my youngsters were born to mentally retarded parents who were institutionalized, and the youngsters were considered to be both developmentally delayed and most likely retarded themselves.

We do indeed have some learning difficulties with one of them, and he also has a hearing loss. But because, I think, of the love and support he has gotten in a family, we were proud to accompany him recently when he took out his first library card and checked out his first books. He is now reading, which we were told several years ago, would probably not be possible.

A second little child with a similar background, who was considered unadoptable for 3 years and was also diagnosed as autistic and did not communicate at all at the age of 3½, we have now been told is one of the livelier children in his first grade classroom and is, in fact, doing ongrade work.

I have also adopted older children—youngsters who spent half their lives in foster care and, as often happens, were moved from home to home. Two of these children were teenagers when they came to our family, and we had enormous difficulties in being able to provide the kind of trust and care that would really help them to feel they belonged.

We have really had an opportunity to experience firsthand the damage that is too often done to youngsters who live for years without a permanent and stable family. Recently, you may have read of a 14-year-old boy in Michigan who took it upon himself to try to rectify the situation. He wrote directly to the Governor and very poignantly stated, "You take away my first family, but you forgot to find me another."

We have literally thousands of children in this situation, and unfortunately many of them do not seem to be able to find the help they need. Adoptive parent organizations are one source of that kind of help.

As you have heard from Father Clements, there are a great many of us who can share from the heart the experience of adoption and make that possibility live in the lives of others. People all over the country are interested in adoption, and just as your office receives inquiries, so too does ours. We hear every year from upwards of 15,000 people of all sorts who are aware that children need families and seek to provide that.

Some of them are, in fact, looking for infants, and those families sometimes face a long wait. But an increasing number are aware of the youngsters who need families—the older, the handicapped, and the minority children—and yet they too find that there are barriers to their placement and that they often face a discouraging system.

We are particularly concerned with one aspect of the Federal Government's program, which we have found to be particularly exciting because it provides an opportunity for these local parents who care so much about the youngsters and can share their personal experience in a way that motivates others.

A particular feature that we have been pleased to assist with is the provision of minigrants to adoptive parent organizations staffed by volunteers all over the country. Just as Father Clements described the simple program and its effectiveness that he was in-

volved with, let me share with you a few of the kinds of activities that our local groups are undertaking.

Parents in suburban Maryland with the Families Adopting Children Everywhere group have provided a parent preparation course, in cooperation with a community college, to enable people who are seeking to adopt to understand the process and make a wise decision about the kind of child they can parent.

The Council on Adoptable Children in New York City has created an Hispanic outreach program to serve the needs of many youngsters in New York City. This includes public service announcements and bus posters which bring the faces of these children to many families who might respond.

The Open Door Society in Missouri has provided, through local churches, forums on adopting the older child, where parents, like myself, who have done this kind of adoption can answer questions and share their stories.

The Arizona Open Door Society has coordinated a picture book of children waiting for families, and handles the responses when individuals from the public call. Colorado Parents for All Children have a black recruitment effort going in the Denver area which has been highly successful and has created a black adoptive parent group as well.

You may be aware of media efforts to feature children who need families, and we are proud to say that many of these have been initiated by adoptive parents. "A Child Is Waiting" is a television series that is coordinated by the Council on Adoptable Children in Knoxville, Tenn.

You may be interested to know just as a personal aside that the very first child featured on that program—a child about the age of Joey Clements—was adopted by the cameraman who filmed the series.

An adoption hotline is manned by volunteers in your own State of Alabama, Senator Denton, through the Alabama Friends of Adoption. Again, they respond to inquiries from a "Wednesday's Child" program, which features children available for placement.

These kinds of projects which engage the interest and enthusiasm of committed adoptive parents really do make a difference. All over the country, we see that when citizen groups are active on behalf of children, more children find families.

You heard earlier in testimony about the enormous cost just in terms of dollars of keeping children in foster care. There is also a tremendous cost in personal terms. I have seen this close up with my own youngsters, and can attest that many other families who have reached out to an older, troubled child are struggling to bring him into full family life.

I believe that the most basic ingredient to successful adulthood is clearly a loving and secure family. Effective adoption programs are both cost effective and humane, and they must be expanded. Children without families must become a higher national priority because they are our future.

As you look at adoption needs and practices in this country, I would recommend that you pay special attention to the following areas which are of concern to adoptive families.

We first must educate the public more fully about adoption and the needs of children. We can do this in a variety of ways through our local and State governments, voluntary organizations and citizen groups, the public schools, and the media.

We must provide support for adoption as a beautiful and viable way to form a family. Adoptive families are strong in their conviction that adoption is not a second-best or second-class way to have children. And the children themselves, Senator, tell us that they wish the stigma that is too often still attached to the word "adopted" would be removed.

Our organization, since 1976, has sponsored National Adoption Week, every year at Thanksgiving time, when we stress a theme that both focuses on children who need families and emphasizes the beauty and rewards of adoptive family life. We have sought a Presidential proclamation for this event and would be pleased to have your support for this kind of national effort.

I believe strongly with other families that we need to provide greater visibility for actual waiting children so that we can effectively recruit the families they need. As I indicated earlier, we are sure that families are available, because we hear from them; they write us touching letters and indicate the tremendous problems they have in reaching the children who need them.

Permanency planning and reform of our Nation's foster care system, such as outlined in Public Law 96-272, will help a great deal to move more children toward adoption. Through systems of case planning and case review, termination of parental rights statutes, provision of adoption subsidy for children with special needs, and the encouragement of caring foster parents as adoption resources, I believe we can offer many children the chance for permanent family life.

Rigid and outmoded agency criteria for adoption must be changed to reflect the diversity of families who are ready and able to accept the challenge of adoption. We hear from many of these families, and too often they are told that they do not meet the agency's standards.

We believe that we must provide adequate preparation and thorough orientation for today's adoptive families so that they can understand the challenges they are accepting, and we must offer comprehensive programs of support services so that after adoption, people can work together to make the placement successful. This is an area where, in particular, parent groups and local volunteers can offer tremendous help to agencies.

We seek, as a national organization, greater involvement of adoptive parents and adoptive parent organizations in all phases of adoption. We have been working at the national level to create a model training program so that adoption can be a process shared by agency professionals and experienced parents who have so much to give others.

I think most important of all, we must try to see ourselves and help others to see themselves as child advocates. There are many complex social problems which beset our Nation, and solutions are hard to find. This particular situation, however, is one for which the strategies and solutions are available.

We believe that every waiting child's future is limited only by our vision of him. Too often, decisionmakers have seen the adoptable children only as a problem. We adoptive parents are vital because we see beyond today's problems to the potential that is locked within each special child. We know personally and can share with others firsthand the great rewards that are possible in reaching out to change forever a young person's life.

Adoptive families are created one at a time, and it is best if we can focus, as parents do, on the individual child. The real feelings of children about adoption which you heard from Joey just a few minutes ago have been expressed in a little poem that came to our office last year by a child who was recently adopted as a 10 year old.

The poem goes like this: "Once I was a stranger; now I know I am me. Once I wandered everywhere; now I am a tree." To me, this simple verse is a really powerful expression of what adoption can mean to a lonely child. Many, many children need the opportunity to be really a part of a family tree.

Dedication to this cause is easy for me and for others like Father Clements, who have adopted youngsters. We have only to go home at night and look into the eyes of our children to be renewed in our efforts to help the others who are still waiting.

We would like to see continued leadership at all levels so that the kind of work that we are doing in communities all over the country can be shared. It is a job that is going to be a big one, but we clearly have some direction.

Legislators certainly cannot do this job alone. The social workers cannot do all that is needed alone. Schools have a big role to play, but they cannot do the job alone, and we parents and families cannot do it alone. But I believe we can, working together, make a tremendous difference for our nation's waiting children.

Adoption is an ordinary miracle; it occurs many, many times each year. Yet, it changes forever the lives of those it touches. I welcome, on behalf of my organization and the many adoptive parents we serve, the opportunity to work with you and members of the subcommittee to help make adoption available for every child who needs a family.

Thank you very much for your interest and concern in adoption matters.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Flynn follows:]

TESTIMONY OF THE NORTH AMERICAN COUNCIL ON ADOPTABLE CHILDREN, INC.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to testify today and applaud the interest of Senator Denton and the members of the Subcommittee in adoption.

My name is Laurie Flynn and I am the Executive Director of the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC). NACAC is the coordinating body for over 400 local adoptive parent organizations all across the United States. Our members are united in the belief that every child has the right to a permanent family. As adoptive parents, we know that no child who can benefit from family life is unadoptable. We share a belief in the rightness of adoption and have been catalyst for much needed reform and innovation in adoption practice and policy.

Since our founding in 1974 as a grassroots citizen-based organization, NACAC, through the commitment and energy of our local volunteers, has worked in three major areas: public education and recruitment of families for children without homes; provision of supportive services for families adopting hard-to-place children; and citizen advocacy to remove barriers to the placement of children too often ignored by our child welfare system.

Adoptive parents have worked effectively to focus public attention on the needs of over 200,000 children currently awaiting placement. We have shared our concern and expertise with decision makers in agencies, courts and legislatures and seek opportunities to work in partnership with professionals on behalf of waiting children.

NACAC has recently been recognized for the contributions we have made to child welfare by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. I was honored to represent our members at the Judges' Annual Conference last week and receive on behalf of our organization their "Meritorious Service to the Children of America Award" for 1981.

My effectiveness as a child advocate flows directly from my personal experience as an adoptive parent. I am the mother of twelve children, five born to me and my husband and seven whom we adopted. I have three black children, two born to mentally retarded, institutionalized parents, who were therefore developmentally delayed, and one who has developed granmal epilepsy.

Two of my children are American Indians and were adopted as teenagers, after seven years in foster care. They had spent more than half their young lives in a system designed to provide "temporary care". My son lived in six different foster families and a residential center. The experience of being shuttled from one home to another left him with almost no concept of family life. He had a limited ability to trust adults and found it extremely difficult to accept the love and stability we offered him. My children lost all contact with their biological family including six brothers and sisters who were very dear to them. The trials and stress we experienced in integrating them into our family taught me most of what I have learned about the damage done to thousands of children who grow up without a permanent nurturing family.

In adopting two older children from Vietnam, I came to realize that even institutional care as is common in the Third World, sometimes offers a better setting for raising homeless children, than is offered in our nation's foster care system which too often means multiple placements and continued disruption of young lives. At least in many of the institutions in the Orient, there is a continuity of care in that those who work with the children tend to remain on their jobs for many years.

For fully one-third of our nation's 600,000 children in foster care, adoption offers the only possibility for a permanent caring family. Adoption builds families at a time when so many forces in our society seem to threaten them. Adoption as an institution must be strengthened and encouraged. All children are precious. Parenthood is so much more than giving birth. Adoptive parents in communities all over the country are finding the joy that comes from sharing their lives with a needy child. Yet too often, our child welfare system discourages adoption and becomes itself a major barrier to the placement of waiting children. Too often the vital resource of caring, adoptive families goes untapped.

The Congress, at the urging of NACAC and many other child advocacy organizations, enacted Public Law 95-266, the Opportunities for Adoption Act, in 1978 to help meet the needs of waiting children. Recognizing that our foster care system has demonstratively failed to provide permanent planning for the many children in its care, the Adoption Opportunities program speaks to several urgent unmet needs of children:

Identification and increased visibility of adoptable children through a national exchange.

Training for social workers and administrators in the skills necessary for successful placement of children with special needs.

Development of effective recruitment material for use with all forms of media special outreach to minority families through projects designed to increase their participation in adoption, as fully 40 percent of waiting children are of minority heritage.

Expansion of the role and effectiveness of adoptive parent organizations.

A particularly exciting feature of the programs provided through the Adoption Opportunities Act is the aware of mini-grants on a competitive basis to adoptive parent groups. These grants ranging from $500 to $3,500 have enabled local volunteers to dramatically increase their programming on behalf of waiting children. The variety of these special projects is impressive and includes:

A parent preparation course taught by volunteers in a community college in Maryland, provided by Families Adopting Children Everywhere.

Outreach to Hispanic families through creation of posters and public service announcements by the New York City Council on Adoptable Children.

Public forums on adopting the older child provided by the Open Door Society of Missouri.

A picture book of waiting children coordinated by the Arizona Open Door Society.

A Black recruitment campaign undertaken by the Colorado Parents For All Children.

Development of a television series called "A Child Is Waiting" by the Council on Adoptable Children of Knoxville, Tennessee.

An adoption hotline manned by volunteer parents to respond to recruitment for a "Wednesday's Child" television program provided by the Alabama Friends of Adoption.

These and many other projects demonstrate the importance of involving adoptive parents in improving and expanding services to waiting children. When citizen groups are active on their behalf, more children are finding the families they need and deserve. Clearly a greater emphasis on providing adoption opportunities for waiting children is urgently needed. The average cost of maintaining a child for one year in foster care is now nearly $3,000. For the most severely handicapped or troubled, institutional care is necessary at a cost of upwards of $10,000 per child. Studies have shown that the average child will remain in foster care for 5 years and will move at least three times. The likelihood of adoption diminishes for each year the child spends in the foster care system. Our nation's child welfare system, supported in large measure by federal funds, has failed to provide thousands of vulnerable children with the most basic ingredient to successful adulthood—a loving, secure family. Effective adoption programs are both cost effective and humane and they must be expanded. Children without families must become a higher national priority because they are our future.

As you focus needed attention on the institution of adoption in America, I would recommend that you pay special attention to the following areas and concerns:

1. We must educate the public about adoption and the needs of children through our local and state governments, voluntary institutions, public schools and all forms of media.

2. We must provide support for adoption as a beautiful and viable way to form a family. Adoptive families are strong in their conviction that adoption is not a second best or second class way to have children. The children themselves have told us that they wish the stigma still attached to the word "adopted" would be removed.

3. We must provide a greater visibility for waiting children and effective recruitment for the families they need. We at NACAC are convinced that the families are available. In the past year, we have received nearly 15,000 inquiries from all over the country about adoption resources. Fully 8,000 citizens responded to a television program aired last November on the Public Broadcasting System. "Adoption In America" clearly and sensitively depicted today's adoption scene and featured heartwarming stories of mentally retarded, handicapped, and older children who have found permanence through adoption.

4. We must institute permanency planning at all levels such as that envisioned by Public Law 96-272, passed with overwhelming bipartisan support last year. Many of the barriers to family life for waiting children can and should be removed through systems of case review and planning, reform of our termination of parental rights statutes, provision of subsidy for children with special needs and the encouragement of foster parents as a primary adoption resource. Rigid and outmoded agency criteria for adoption must be changed to reflect the diversity of families ready and able to accept the challenge of parenting children with special needs.

5. We must provide adequate and thorough preparation for today's adoptive families and offer comprehensive programs and support services to assist them in integrating, sometimes difficult, children into their family life.

6. We must seek greater involvement of adoptive parents and adoptive parent organizations in all phases of the adoption process. NACAC, through a federal grant, is developing a model training program to enable agency professionals to work with adoptive parents as co-leaders in the homestudy process. The TEAM Program will be demonstrated in several areas of the country beginning this fall and we are gratified to note the enthusiastic response which this effort has met.

7. Perhaps most important of all, we must seek to engage a wide range of people as child advocates. There are many complex social problems besetting our nation which seem to defy solution. This problem, however, is one for which the techniques and solutions are available.

Every waiting child's future is limited only by our vision of him. Too often decisionmakers see adoptable children only as a problem. We adoptive parents see beyond today's problems to the potential locked within each special child. We know first hand the great rewards that are possible in reaching out to change, forever, a young life. Pascal said it best, "It is only with the heart that one sees rightly."

Adoptive families are made one at a time and it is best to remember that each child is an individual. The value to children of family life has never been more

beautifully expressed than in the following small poem written by a ten year old boy who was adopted:

"Once I was a stranger
Now I know I'm me
Once I wandered everywhere
Now I am a tree."

To me, this simple verse is a powerful expression of what adoption can mean to a lonely child. So many children still wait to be loved, to be cherished, to truly belong.

Dedication to their cause is easy for me and for other adoptive parents. We have only to go home and look into the eyes of our special children to be renewed in our efforts for those still without a home. A childhood is too brief and too precious to be wasted.

Continued aggressive leadership at all levels is vitally needed, if we are to provide families for the children who wait. Legislators cannot do the job alone. Social workers cannot do the job alone. The schools cannot do the job alone. The parents and families cannot do the job alone. We must all work together.

I welcome on behalf of my organization, the opportunity to work with you to make adoption, the ordinary miracle, available to every child who needs a family.

Thank you again for your interest and the opportunity to testify.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Mrs. Flynn.

Does your organization have a position on the proposed Model State Adoption Act?

Mrs. FLYNN. We have examined the Model State Adoption Act in some detail, and I was, in fact, a member of the panel. We are particularly concerned with the sections that relate to the adoption of special needs children. That was the reason that I was asked to be represented on the panel, and because we feel strongly that those sections are very, very needed, we would hope that whenever the Secretary releases a final version, particular attention would be paid to keeping those sections intact.

But we are hopeful that at some stage, the Federal Department of Health and Human Services will release a version of the model act that focuses energy where it is really needed—on the adoption of waiting children.

Senator DENTON. In receiving Federal funds to date under Public Law 95-266, the Adoptions Opportunities Act, what has been the situation regarding the relative amount of assistance to you in advocating special needs adoption programs?

Mrs. FLYNN. I believe the entire appropriation was a total of $5 million. I think it was reduced in the second year slightly. Our organization received a national award to help these local adoptive parent groups in the amount of $200,000 a year.

We have provided training for parents, the expansion of local group activities, and advocacy for needed changes in our policy and structure. There were adoption resource centers provided through the Federal legislation, and I believe each received approximately the same amount of money as our organization—somewhere between $200,000 and $300,000—to coordinate activities with agencies and service providers.

I am not tremendously familiar with how all of those other grantees have used their funds, but I would be most pleased to answer questions about our own program.

Senator DENTON. In view of the time and the many witnesses, I will have to restrict myself to fewer questions than otherwise, but I will submit a number of them to you for the record so that you may respond.

You obviously, by your example, believe in transracial adoption. How do you look at that nationwide? Do you believe that that is to be encouraged?

Mrs. FLYNN. I have, indeed, a transracial family and a multicultural family, and I do believe that transracial adoption can work and may be a resource for some children.

Like Father Clements, I think I would want to seek first a family that might be able to meet the child's needs in terms of cultural identity and racial pride in reflecting the same race. If that is not possible within a reasonable period of time, then I think we need to look at all the resources available.

Like Father Clements, and I think like all adoptive families, I would never want to deny a child even a day of a caring, permanent setting because of a desire to match in any way.

We do find that when we have, as a citizen organization, gone out into the black community and worked with people who are interested, there is no lack of response, as Father Clements stated. I believe there are many, many black families, and Hispanic and native American families, who will come forward and adopt these youngsters if we can just get those youngsters and their message out there.

Senator DENTON. How did you happen to adopt your Vietnamese-born children?

Mrs. FLYNN. They were two different situations. One child came to us as a 6-year-old through the "Baby Lift" operation. Primarily because we were an experienced family, we were asked if we would accept the youngster, and we have been most thrilled to have him as part of our family.

The other youngster came to us at 15. She had been placed initially after the "Baby Lift" in an adoptive family, which did not work out to the satisfaction of everyone, and the agency needed to find another placement. So, she came to us as a second adoptive family.

Senator DENTON. Could you help me learn more at a subsequent time about the situation between us and Vietnam? Now, of course, the relations are very deteriorated, but yet the orphans who are being served by so many agencies are still over there.

If you have any positive, optimistic ideas about how this might be approached, I would be very interested in hearing it.

Mrs. FLYNN. We are, as an adoptive parent organization, very aware and concerned about the plight of those youngsters that you referred to earlier who have been fathered by American citizens, in most cases, but have been left within the nation of the mother.

As you probably know, many times they do not have a very good future in that country because of their mixed blood. And we have a real desire to encourage the possibility that they may be able to come to this country with the possibility of citizenship, if they would so choose and if sponsors could be found.

Again, I have no doubt that there are many sponsors, because we hear from families in our network who are very concerned about the real plight of these youngsters.

Father Alfred Keane, whom you may be aware of, has been very active on their behalf, and our organization generally supports very strongly his work.

Senator DENTON. Yes, he is one with whom I am familiar too, and he visited with me about 3 weeks ago.

Thank you very much, Mrs. Flynn, for your testimony.

Mrs. FLYNN. Thank you.

Senator DENTON. Mr. Harris?

Mr. HARRIS. Good morning, and thank you, Senator Denton, for the opportunity to appear here this morning.

I would like to preface my comments by saying that it is a breath of fresh air, at a time when everybody is concerned about the economy and balancing the budget, to have someone such as yourself think that the needs of children are sufficiently important not to lose sight of, in spite of everything else.

I think our most precious product is and will be, if we ever keep aware of it, children. I might add, by the way, that the agency I represent, Beech Brook, has a history of approximately 129 years of service. We began in response to a cholera epidemic in the Cleveland area to serve orphan children.

Over the 129 years, we have done many things in many ways, but always with the child as first and foremost in our concern. And lest we think we are continually reinventing the wheel, I should add that around 1890 to 1910, we had as many as 600 children placed throughout Ohio and in abutting states in foster and adoptive homes.

Now, I have submitted to you, as others have, prepared testimony, and I would rather not read it to you, but simply comment on some highlights and perhaps respond to any questions.

Much has been said about the various problems and issues regarding adoption, and I must start by again restating that our particular adoption unit is one of a series of services that Beech Brook offers, from out-patient services in the community to children with special needs—emotionally disturbed—to evaluation of Head Start children, through to the most intensive of residential treatment.

Our adoption service for children with special needs begins and ends with the most important focus, and that is the child is our client and we seek the answers for the child which will, in essence, answer many of the questions I have heard mentioned this morning and comments thereof.

There are very real problems, and maybe I can address further some of the obstacles. There is no panacea answer to the problem of adoption for special needs children, but there is opportunity and need for greater understanding, cooperation and effort.

One of the dilemmas we face in Ohio, and our counterpart agencies throughout the country, is that many public agencies have, in theory at least, adopted the concept that they will support the placement of special needs children. Unfortunately, bureaucracy being what it is—and, like you, I will not denigrate individual workers, but I will denigrate bureaucracy—much of the stereotype thinking remains.

So, while everyone agrees on the surface that there are special kinds of people, Mrs. Flynn, to my left, would not be eligible for a special needs child if she went through a public agency because she already has children, and we have to spread them out. The problems continue in this direction.

We can find the home and find the match, and then be frustrated and totally defeated by the inability of the public sector to respond with appropriate approval. I might add, incidentally, that there is a kind of sense of futility—and different parts of the country may differ, but certainly in our area—to evaluate and process and diagnose and write up hundreds upon hundreds of families seeking infants, when there are practically none available.

The cost and effort in that particular focus, when so few can be adopted, could be far better used if some of those efforts and funds and resources could be used to expand the effort to find families for special needs children.

There are very clear fiscal deterrents which really have not been touched upon by anyone before me. This is a rather strange phenomenon in that some funds established by the Federal Government to help serve children and the elderly by means of medicaid, for instance, can also serve as a deterrent.

For example, in our state, if a child is classified as retarded or developmentally disabled, that child may be placed in an institution or a nursing home, or some similar facility, and there is no cost to the county; in our particular State, it is a county administered system.

Consequently, there is not only no incentive to remove that child, where the county is absorbing no part of the expense, but there is a deterrent to removing the child because they would have to pay something—anywhere from $2,500 up to perhaps $7,000—to afford the cost of placing that child for adoption.

The logic, of course, is that that this a one-time expenditure, with a long-term, positive investment. Whatever is being spent, be it Federal, State or local dollars, ultimately comes out of your pocket and my pocket, and somebody is paying for it. But it is a disincentive.

I think, if I could stress one concept, whatever ultimate route this hearing and the process you have entered into will take, we have to develop more of an incentive concept. There are several bills that were referred to, to provide tax deductions, for instance. I heartily support anything of that nature, but would add that it is not enough.

If we can afford to pay roughly $10,000 a year to keep a child in foster care—and I am not talking about the very publicized room and board costs, which, as has been indicated, are not even equal to what you pay to put a dog in a kennel sometimes, but include all the supportive services which far exceed that small fee per day—surely, we could look at a better way of supporting and encouraging special needs children being placed for adoption.

A foster family has an adoption deterrent, because at least they are getting some funds to help them with the foster care expense. Special needs children, when adopted, do not cease to have special needs. Sometimes, there is a requirement for special kinds of babysitting. The average babysitter may not be able to handle such a child.

There are lots of stimulating experiences and special kinds of services that such children provide. And, sadly, all of our subsidizing and all of our fiscal supports come nowhere close to helping encourage families to help these children.

Let me just say to you, by the way, that in terms of the kinds of children that can be placed—and this material was submitted to you—the average age of the children that our Spaulding Unit has placed in the past 3½ years was 9.7 years. They ranged from a 15-month-old who was retarded and diagnosed as being a dwarf, to a 15½-year-old boy who spent most of his life in an institution. For every child, there is a story that could have a book written about it.

We have seen some of these children in a variety of ways, and I should say to you that we see adopted children in treatment, also. We see children who are not adopted; we see the whole range of youngsters. But we do not provide the end result sufficiently well.

Back again to the fiscal area, since ours is a world of fiscal concern, as you pointed out. It is not removed from children, but people do not often think of it. In some instances a foster/adoptive family receives room and board, and the child is also eligible for supplemental security income benefits. If the mother or father happen to be working at a low level of income, once the child is adopted, they cease to be eligible for the SSI benefit.

So, here we have what was intended to be a positive support system, as was medicaid, and it becomes a deterrent.

I have heard many statements about what has been done to children by our system. When I say "our system," it is all of us; you cannot hang it just on the public, because the volunteers are also people.

Recently, I was in South Carolina—as a matter of fact, a week ago—and I thought I had known and heard the end all when I knew a child who, before the age of 10, had 18 foster care placements, of which one was a 4-year stay in an institution.

While in South Carolina, I was told of a child who has just been placed for adoption who had 35 foster care misplacements, in my book; the "mis-" is my added comment.

A massive effort is needed. I do not believe that any one approach will suffice. I would support what Father Clements has done, what Mrs. Flynn has done, and what the Government could or should be doing. But I firmly believe that all of these efforts have to be combined and continued, and there cannot be the typical reaction of, "We have got a crisis; let us do it for 3 weeks and forget about it." It has to be an ongoing, sustained effort, if the children who have special needs are to begin to have those needs met.

Let me make just two closing comments. One, I included in my remarks to you—and it came out of our minutes from our board of trustees in 1880, all of whom were nonprofessionals—"The family is the true social unit. In the family are the rudiments of all social institutions. The family, in its simplest types, represents the laws of dependence and trust, of authority and obedience, of obligation and helpfulness, by which all the active duties of life are regulated."

In my closing prepared comments, I made reference to the fact that while I had focused somewhat on the fiscal area to try to indicate how we go against the grain instead of with it many times, even with good intentions, by making services more costly and not transferable, shall I say—in other words, if we can spend $32,000 to

place a child in residential treatment (which is what it costs at our agency), why can we not transfer some of that money, when it is appropriate, to place and support that child in adoption, if that is the need?

Very simply, what I am talking about may represent some immediate economic gain, on the one hand, and increased expenditures on the other. But can anyone deny the primary issue; namely, the right of children with special needs to the same permanency available to all the other children in the world?

Thank you.

[The prepared statement and additional material of Mr. Harris follow:]

July 23, 1981

To: The Senate Hearing on Adoption - Special Needs

Mr. Chairman, Senators,

I wish to express my appreciation for the opportunity to appear before you in order to testify regarding adoption issues for "special needs" children.

In order to provide a frame of reference for my remarks, I need to touch briefly on the history of the agency I direct, Beech Brook. Beech Brook is a 129 year old agency that began in Cleveland in 1852, in reapsone to children orphaned as a result of a cholera epidemic. Over the next approximately 100 years, the Beech Brook Board of Trustees of that century continuously developed, changed and modified program in order to respond to the changing and developing needs of children they served. As early as the 1880's, a Beech Brook Board Committee reported that its review of efforts and activities of the agency only served to further confirm the role of the agency, and more importantly the importance of family. They specifically stated:

> "The family is the true social unit. In the family are the rudiments of all social institutions. The family is sacramental and reveals earthly and heavenly relationships. In marriage there is the union that completes character; in parentage and childhood appear the co-relative responsibilities. The well ordered family is the school of righteousness, the one place above all others where character is best formed. It represents in simplest types the laws of dependence and trust, of authority and obedience, of obligation and helpfulness, by which all the active duties of life are regulated."

In essence what it says is that the child is best nurtured in his or her own home and that the agency serves as a vehicle or mechanism in a transitory

fashion designed to prepare the child to live in a home and in a family.

1890's and early 1900's, Beech Brook services had expanded from institutional care to the major focus on adoption and foster care, with over 600 children in placement in Ohio and 6 abutting states. We hired our first social worker in 1911 and our first consulting psychiatrist in 1932. In 1960 the Board made a major decision to focus solely on serving severely emotionally disturbed children and their families.

From those beginnings, Beech Brook today is a multi-service agency which in the past year provided an array of treatment services to over 800 children and over 2,000 family members.

In the early 1970's, Beech Brook was approached about its willingness to consider undertaking a specialized service -- adoption services for hard-to-place children. Such children could be emotionally disturbed, socially maladjusted, have psychological and/or mental problems, be older children, minority children, bi-racial children -- all elements which tended to render them seemingly unacceptable for adoption placement. At that point in time, our expertise was and is in services to the severely emotionally disturbed, multi-handicapped children.

I have attached some information that outlines the activities and efforts of our Spaulding children since 1977. As can be readily seen by the statistical information and descriptive data, the so-called unplaceable children have proved to be quite the opposite. Needless to say, it is not a simple task and requires the unique combination of skill and dedication on the part of all involved in the process, from the unit staff to the would be adoptive families. In this process, we have learned much about

the needs and problems related to such adoptions. Let me state initially that not all children are by any means adoptable, just as equally true that not all children fit into one category. However, there are many, many hundreds and thousands of children in this country who have been confined to a role of unstable and insecure growth and development by virtue of a failure to plan for permanency for them. The positives in this scene abound in terms of the unique committed individuals who appear on the scene, seemingly with a mission at times, to provide family life, love and permanency for these youngsters.

The obstacles are real and begin with the most difficult of all, namely competing with a massive stereotype view that only infants can be placed successfully for adoption. While there have been startling advances and changes in attitudes in various parts of the country, by and large, particularly in the public governmental section, there has been resistance both covert and overt to successfully undertaking adoption of children with special needs. It is true that in many governmental agencies there are efforts made and commitments to have staff work with such children, that by and large our experience has been that such efforts are often defeated by bureaucracy as usual. While the families recruited may not be the typical families in order to meet the atypical needs of these children, the expectations and requirements for legal approval tend too often to be the stereotype for infant adoption.

Other instances of existing patterns of function in the adoption process which are both sources of frustration and economically unsound include tremendous expenditures of funds evaluating families for the purposes of infant adoption placement when there is a clear knowledge that very few of those families will ever be fortunate enough to receive babies.

Another interesting phenomenon apropos the above, is that in a variety of states and/or counties throughout the country, depending on who has administrative jurisdiction and responsibility, there is a fiscal deterrant to seeking permanency for certain kinds of youngsters such as those who are retarded and/or developmentally disabled. Because the funding for maintaining such children in a variety of institutions, hospitals and nursing homes does not eminate from the funds of the administrative legal guardian, said counties and states appear loathe to spend additional dollars for the purposes of purchasing the adoption placements. Again this is not to say that for some infants and children with special needs such placements may be the only appropriate placements, but certainly there are far more with potential adoptive availability than the majority of public agencies are willing to acknowledge.

Similarly, in some instances children may be recipients of S.S.I. (Supplemental Security Income benefits) whereas the potential adoptive mother is earning just sufficient funds to be over the eligibility limit. Because of the regulatory process, the combined income from S.S.I. and the board rate prevent said family from receiving a subsidy following finalization.

Yet, such a child may require specialized babysitters and/or stimulating activities, games, etc.

For any child among the special needs category where permanency could be achieved through adoption, there is a tragic dual loss to society as well as to the individual. Clearly to perpetuate placement away from home or a family for any child is a severe, traumatic series of experiences that hinder the ability of that individual to function at his or her maximum level throughout his or her life. In terms of pure economics, there is no logic whatsoever in the failure of the public and the voluntary agencies to move on a massive scale to find and secure permanency for the many special needs children who are otherwise maintained in far more costly (in long-term figures) placements. A simple illustration will suffice -- a child kept in an institutional or nursing home setting may easily cost society anywhere from $20,000 on up yearly. Even foster care on an annualized basis cost close to $10,000 a year when all related costs are included. Cost of successful placement of a special needs child for adoption is a one time expenditure which may range, depending on the part of the country and the nature of the agencies involved, from $2,500 to perhaps $7,000 per case. Even considering ongoing subsidization, the cost to society is far less in pure economics, let alone in human values.

Finally, there is without question an excess of children with special needs awaiting placement who are black. While the reasons for this are numerous, our Spaulding experience has been that we place approximately the same actual number of white and black children on an average, but that overall our referrals of black children exceed considerably the referrals

of white children. This is an obstacle — the lack of available and interested families for said children, which can only be overcome with a continuous effort at public awareness such as illustrated by Father Clements, but such an approach is short-lived and even more short-remembered. If only one individual steps forward as did Father Clements, there is an ongoing need to expand the public awareness and to be more willing to provide whatever supports are necessary, be they fiscal or otherwise, in order to achieve a greater degree of permanency for a far greater number of children with special needs.

In conclusion, what I have described above may represent some immediate economic gains on the one hand and expenditures on the other, but can any one deny the primary issue namely the right of children with special needs to the same permanency available to all the other children in the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Don M. Harris

Don M. Harris, Executive Director
Beech Brook

July 23, 1981

Spaulding For Children — Beech Brook

3737 Lander Road • Cleveland, Ohio 44124 • (216) 464-4445

Spaulding For Children - Beech Brook was founded in the fall of 1976 with the purpose of finding permanent loving homes for the "Waiting Children" in Ohio. The agency has been successful in adoptive homes for children with a wide variety of problems. The following are some facts about these children:

1. The average age of children placed is 9.7 years. The youngest child was a fifteen month old who was retarded and diagnosed as being a dwarf. The oldest child placed was a 15 1/2 year old boy who had lived most of his life in an institution.
2. On the average, our children have had five different placements prior to being referred to our agency. One eight year old had had fourteen different placements.
3. 56% of the children were in either institutions or specialized group homes prior to adoptive placement.
4. Almost half of the children placed for adoption are Black.
5. 85% of the placements will go on to be legally finalized by the courts.

PROFILE OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN PLACED FOR ADOPTION
BY SPAULDING FOR CHILDREN - BEECH BROOK

1. Eight year old White boy, severely disturbed.
2. Ten year old Black girl, a slow learner.
3. Seven year old White retarded boy, disturbed.
4. Ten year old Black boy, retarded, muscular dystrophy.
5. Fourteen year old White girl, slow and emotionally disturbed.
6. Fourteen year old Bi-Racial boy, emotionally disturbed.
7. Nine year old Black girl, hyperactive, emotionally disturbed.
8. Fifteen and a half year old White boy.
9. Fourteen year old Black retarded girl.
10. Nine year old Black boy, emotionally disturbed.
11. Five year old, non-ambulatory White boy, profoundly retarded.
12. Eight year old White boy, emotionally disturbed.
13. Ten year old White boy, mildly emotionally disturbed.
14. & 15. Black brothers, eleven and ten years old.
16. Three year old White boy, Downs Syndrome and medical problems.
17. Seven year old White boy with Downs Syndrome.
18. Fourteen year old White boy, seriously disturbed.
19. & 20. Black brothers, six and seven years old.
21. Fifteen year old White boy, emotionally disturbed.
22. Twelve year old Black girl, severely emotionally disturbed.
23. Two year old retarded White boy with undiagnosed physical problems.
24. Twelve year old White boy, severely disturbed.
25. Fourteen year old White boy.
26. Fifteen month old White retarded boy, a dwarf.
27. Five year old Black boy with undiagnosed developmental lag.
28. Eleven year old Black boy with minor emotional problems.
29. Seven year old Black boy with minor emotional problems.
30. Fourteen year old Black girl with emotional problems.
31. Ten year old Black boy with minor emotional problems.
32. Eight year old Black girl with emotional problems.
33. Five year old Black retarded boy.
34. Eight year old White retarded boy with severe speech impediment.
35. Nine year old Black girl with emotional problems.
36. Four year old White retarded boy, severe speech problems.
37. & 38. Retarded White brothers, ages five and six, severe speech problems.
39. & 40. & 41. Black siblings, age twelve, ten and eight with emotional problems.
42. Ten year old White boy with emotional problems.
43. Ten year old White boy with emotional problems.
44. Ten year old White boy with emotional problems.
45. Twelve year old White girl, slow with emotional problems.
46. Ten year old White boy with emotional problems.
47. Eleven year old White retarded girl.
48. Twelve year old Black retarded girl.
49. Eleven year old blind retarded White boy.
50. 12 year old White boy with emotional problems.

51. 12 year old Black girl with emotional problems.
52. 6 year old White trainably retarded boy with speech problems.
53. 13 year old Bi-racial boy with emotional problems.
54. 3 year old profoundly retarded White boy.
55. 6 year old White retarded boy.
56. 12 year old Black retarded boy with emotional problems.
57.&58. White siblings ages 12 & 13 with emotional problems
59. 10 year old Black boy.
60. 11 year old Black boy with minor emotional problems.
61. 11 year old White boy with multiple problems.
62. 12 year old Black girl with emotional problems.
63 & 64 12 year old Black twin boys.
65,66&67 Siblings ages 9, 7 & 6; Black with some emotional problems.
68. 14 year old White boy with severe emotional problems.
69. 15 year old Black boy with emotional problems; placed with sister #62.
70. 11 year old Black boy with minor emotional problems.
71. 10 year old Black girl with emotional problems
72&73. White siblings ages 8 & 10 with emotional problems.
74&75. Black brothers ages 3 & 5.
76. 13 year old White girl with emotional problems.

DISPOSITION BY SEX & RACE
OF CHILDREN REFERRED 9/76 - 7/81

	White		Black		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Totals
Withdrawn	9	5	15	8	37
Waiting	10	7	17	7	41
Placed	32	6	23	15	76
Total Referred	51	18	55	30	154
Placed	33	3	26	12	76

+ 2 Bi-racial

SPAULDING FOR CHILDREN-BEECH BROOK STATISTICS

Total Number Placed - 76

White		Black		Emotionally Disturbed	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Mild	Severe
3	3	26	12	28	5

Retarded			Downs Syndrome	Speech Problems
Mild	Severe	Physical	2	3
7	1	1		

Multiple Handicapped

2 Retarded and Disturbed
1 Retarded and Mentally Disturbed
1 Bi-racial, Disturbed
1 Retarded, Non-Ambulatory
1 Retarded, dwarf
2 Retarded, Emotionally Disturbed
1 Blind and Retarded

Sibling Groups

2 Black Males (10 and 11)
2 Black Males (6 and 7)
2 White Males (5 and 6) + retarded
3 Black Males (12, 10, 8) emot. dist.
2 White Males (12 and 13) emot. dist.
2 Black Males (12) twins
2 White Males (8 and 10) emot. dist.
2 Black Males (3 and 5)

Bi-Racial

2 Males

Other

1 14 year old White Male
1 15 1/2 year old White Male
1 10 year old Black Male

Totals

Male	Female	White	Black	Bi-Racial
61	15	36	38	2

Senate Hearing On Adoption -
Special Needs

Barriers

Not enough parents available for the number of kids needing homes.

Misdirected use of funds - a lot of money spent studying families for infants - very few families will get babies.

Medicaid for Developmentally Disabled and Retarded in Institutions - free to counties - why pay for adoption service. True elsewhere in U.S.A.

Income eligibility re subsidizing - Example is Freddie - has S.S.I. - lives in a family of 1. The mother earns just over the limit. Would lose S.S.I. and board rate - about $5,000 yearly. Some of his special needs are babysitting, stimulating activities and toys and games.

Hattie Larlam - counties pay zero for kids - why place for adoption.

Sterotype attitudes by the public.

Average number of hours spent on adoption case is 150.

WHAT IS BEECH BROOK

Beech Brook is a psychotherapeutic treatment center for children and their families. It serves fifty children from five to twelve years of age who have emotional problems. It is coeducational, nonsectarian, and privately endowed. As an institution it has been in existence over 125 years.

ITS SERVICES

Beech Brook provides the following:

1.) a five-day residential service, with children spending weekends and holidays with their families;

2.) a 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. day treatment service, with children spending each night with their families;

3.) an outpatient service, in which children and families come to Beech Brook for psychotherapy or psycho-educational diagnostic services;

4.) an after-care service, for families and children who have been discharged from the full day treatment or residency programs;

5.) a summer-only service, for children who need Beech Brook's treatment-oriented social-educational programming only in the summer months;

6.) a weekend treatment service for children who have appropriate school placements during the week. These children come to Beech Brook Friday evening thru Sunday (6 P.M.) for diagnosis, therapy and/or help to the family in management;

7.) provides a Children's Clinic of the Hurtis H. Taylor Multi-Services Center at 13422 Kinsman Avenue (an outpatient clinic);

8.) a day treatment service at 14703 Kinsman Avenue in conjunction with the Cleveland Board of Education and the Children's Clinic and two other classrooms for day treatment in Cleveland Schools in conjunction with the Cleveland Board of Education;

9.) sponsors Spaulding for Children-Beech Brook at 3737 Lander Road, Pepper Pike, Ohio, 44124, an adoption service for children with special needs.

Our staff consists of:

- seven psychologists, thirteen social workers, music and art therapists.
- a principal, seven teachers, and six teachers' aides, and an educational tutor, who operate Gund School, the treatment-oriented educational facility on the campus, which is jointly administered by Beech Brook and Orange Local School District.
- three psychiatric consultants
  a psychiatric medical director
- a registered nurse
- a program and group-activity specialist

- sixteen child care workers
- supportive and maintenance workers and work-skill supervisors
- advanced graduate students in psychology, social work, special education, music therapy, and speech therapy who work in the Beech Brook program as part of their professional training.

ITS PHYSICAL PLANT

Physically, Beech Brook is a wooded seventy-five acre campus in Pepper Pike, an eastern suburb of Cleveland. Nine buildings serve as centers for treatment, schooling and activity programs as well as for children's residence quarters.

OUR APPROACH TO TREATMENT

Beech Brook believes in keeping children within families, and in keeping family relationships alive and parental responsibilities active. We offer individual psychotherapy, group counseling, art and music therapy, psychiatric consultation, a therapeutically oriented, day-long social-educational program. We also involve both parents and all offspring in family-group psychotherapy.

REFERRAL SOURCES

About half of Beech Brook's referrals come from school systems. School officials refer families to Beech Brook when no appropriate educational or treatment program exists within the school system for the child or family with these particular difficulties.

About a quarter of our referrals come from various community agencies, physicians and hospitals to which parents have turned for diagnosis or treatment.

Other referrals come from public agencies which have assumed some responsibility such as Children's Boards, and the State Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disability.

In current practice, most of our families reside in northeastern Ohio. We will consider admissions from any geographic area in Ohio, however, provided that the family can accept engaging with us in the treatment process. A family from outside the northeastern Ohio area might engage in family therapy here on the basis of an intensive weekend per month. Children, however, whose families do not live in Ohio cannot be admitted at this time, except for the summer-only program.

We also accept self-referrals, i.e., from parents who have heard about Beech Brook's treatment program and believe that their child and their family need one of its services.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION

We will consider for admission into one of our programs any child:

1.) who is between the ages of 5 and 12;

2.) who has emotional problems;

3.) who has some kind of identified family (intact, partial or foster) with which we can work.

THE CHOICE OF SERVICE

For children who are able to maintain themselves in their local school programs and community and whose internal family relationships can best be worked on with the child full-time in the home, treatment in our outpatient service is recommended. In this program, children and families engage with Beech Brook only in family psychotherapy sessions (or, in some cases, family therapy, plus individual therapy with one or another member of the family).

If a child needs a full day program of therapeutically oriented academic, group and activity experiences, as well as individual and family psychotherapy, he will be considered for our day treatment or our residency program.

These two programs are identical, except that the child in residence remains at Beech Brook throughout the evening and night five days a week. In general, residency is considered for children whose families live beyond convenient daily commuting range. Other considerations for the residency program might be: families in which members need some temporary distance and reduction of interaction in order to gain perspective; families in which a child's special needs pose such stress to his family that a staff of professional child care workers appears needed in order to share functions that overburden the parents by themselves; and families which are in some kind of temporary acute crisis (such as the crisis of working out a divorce).

In the intake process, we explore with the parents their willingness and ability to accept some financial responsibility for the treatment at Beech Brook. The minimal family payment is $200.00 per month, with three months to be paid in advance.

Agency payments are determined by contractual arrangements with each agency, often involving Title XX. Starting in 1980 these rates are $82.00 per day for residential treatment and $49.50 for day treatment.

If a child is accepted for our day treatment or residency program, and thus attends school at Beech Brook during September to June, we need to have an agreement from the school system in the applicant's area of residence that the sending school district will be financially responsible for the child's state-determined educational tuition fee. This is sent to the Orange City School District. This is separate from fees paid by parents or agencies for clinical services at Beech Brook. In 1979 the cost to public schools was $198.97 per month (excluding the summer session); this amount is recalculated periodically.

Children in day treatment or residency have the same school holidays at home that Orange Schools have, including about two weeks Christmas and one week spring vacation. Beech Brook's Gund School continues through the summer, however, with three weeks vacation at home just before the regular Fall school term starts.

The summer-only program is for children who are in other public school programs from September to June, but who need structured social-educational programming for the summer. Beech Brook's natural summer-camp-like setting and its therapeutically oriented teaching and programming techniques combine to provide summer-only children as well as our full-year residency and day treatment children an experience of academic, personal, and social enrichment. Children and families registered for the summer-only program are encouraged to use the available therapy services.

The afternoon-evening program during the school year serves children who are in a public school program in their home community, but need structured peer-group experiences in after-school hours. It may include overnight stay at Beech Brook (in a home situation, for instance, where adequate overnight supervision is not available).

The weekend only program is provided for those children who have a school program which meets their needs during the week, as well as some home support. It is designed to give children socialization and self-care experiences in a small group setting, as well as meeting a family need for therapy, support and respite. It may also be used as part of the after-care program where brief periods of comprehensive care may assist in the transition from full residential treatment.

FINANCING AND FEES

Beech Brook is supported by endowment income, agency payments, educational tuition fees paid by schools, and family fees. Family fees are set according to the family's ability to pay.

For the summer-only service, the fee for the eight week package in 1981 is $2,000.00. This is also open to out-of-state residence on a 7 day a week basis.

For outpatient psychotherapy, fees are $30.00 a visit.

Under the terms of some insurance policies, psychotherapy, medication, dental care or other costs, may be reimbursable.

REFERRALS

Inquiries about using our services should be made to:

Dr. Myrtle Astrachan
Associate Director
Beech Brook
P. O. Box 24010
3737 Lander Road
Pepper Pike, Ohio 44124

Telephone: (216) 831-2255

MA:ca
2/6/81

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Harris.

Do you believe that the sensitive promotion of infant adoption with young pregnant girls would reduce the large number of children now growing up in foster care?

Mr. HARRIS. I believe, Senator, that it would be one step toward that direction. Again, I think any step by itself is a vacuum, but I would support that as one effort in the right direction.

Senator DENTON. What can be done to encourage public agencies to increase the number of adoptions of minority and special needs children so that they will not grow up in foster care?

Mr. HARRIS. I think, Senator, that the only way that I can conceive of is to somehow make the incentive system of reimbursement for placement greater than the current system of supplementing the nonpermanency in a foster care institution.

I believe we would have to establish a concept that allows ongoing support. We have the myth that once a child is placed, finally, particularly a special needs child, that no further services are needed. This is so far from the truth. The efforts made to bond and support that child and family pay off in dividends of humane values and the opportunity for an individual to grow to healthy adulthood.

So, therefore, I suggest that ways be considered to make it an incentive to place for adoption. There have been instances in the past in this country where there was additional reimbursement if a governmental unit did something positive.

We pay to find the parents who will not support their children; why not pay to find parents who do support?

Senator DENTON. Well, there is a lot of logic, in my opinion, in what you have both said. I want to thank you, Mrs. Flynn and Mr. Harris. Your professionalism and competence are obvious, and so is your compassion and commonsense. I want to remind you that we will keep the record open for 2 weeks for you to answer additional questions we give you and for you to submit any further information you feel inspired to offer as a result of the dialog that has taken place today.

Thank you very much.

Mr. HARRIS. Thank you, Senator.

Mrs. FLYNN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator DENTON. Could we have Mrs. Piester, Mrs Greathouse, and Mr. Donlevy at the witness table, please?

This panel of witnesses is here today to discuss the nature of infant adoption in America, and we are fortunate to have them: Mrs. Ruby Lee Piester, executive director of the Edna Gladney Home, and she was recently featured here in People magazine; Mrs. Joyce Greathouse, executive director of the Children's Aid Society in Birmingham, Ala.; and Mr. Ray Donlevy, executive director of the Catholic Charities of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Birmingham.

As an Alabamian, I would like to welcome my fellow Alabamians to this room, and I must pay tribute tc the outstanding work of the Edna Gladney Home in Fort Worth.

Thank you all for coming, again, on such short notice, and we will start on my left with Mrs. Piester.

STATEMENT OF RUBY LEE PIESTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE EDNA GLADNEY HOME, FORT WORTH, TEX.; JOYCE GREATHOUSE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.; AND RAYMOND E. DONLEVY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CATHOLIC FAMILY SERVICES OF THE DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM, ALA., A PANEL

Mrs. PIESTER. I am so pleased, Senator Denton, to be here today, and I have given to you much in writing in terms of the picture of infant adoption. But I want to highlight some issues that I think are very important.

The Edna Gladney Home is a residential treatment center for adolescents who are pregnant. It includes a maternity hospital and a junior and senior high school. We are also a licensed adoption agency.

I am so very pleased to be able to discuss the policy option of adoption for young, single, troubled parents and their families. We are all concerned about the increasing numbers of teenagers who are engaging in sexual relations and the corresponding increase in the number of teenage pregnancies.

Yet, despite this growing trend, adoption as an alternative to abortion or adolescent parenthood has received little attention from our country's leaders, either in the political or in the social spheres of our society.

I am so very pleased to share my experiences with an agency that has grown and the numbers of women it has served who have chosen adoption and have seen the positive service of adoption as an alternative to the teenage parent problem.

I would like to share with you the services offered by the Edna Gladney Home. We, the board and our staff, believe that our services are unique and that the highly professional standards at Gladney are one of a kind in this country.

The Edna Gladney Home has an 84-year history, during which time thousands of pregnant girls and their families have received supportive services throughout their unplanned pregnancies. Over 14,000 babies have been placed with adoptive parents during this period of time.

Last year, the home provided services and referrals for 600 young women; 377 of these young women chose the alternative of adoption.

The Edna Gladney Home does not receive financial support from the Government or the United Way. In 1980, our budget was $2.5 million. We are in the nonprofit capacity of raising fees from charitable private foundations, which is about 21 percent of the cost of our operation. Young women pay about another 21 percent; the remainder is reimbursement from adoptive parents for the girl's medical care during her stay.

At Gladney, we begin with the needs of the young women. The program has been ever-changing, which has offered flexibility and depth of relationship with a skilled case work staff that helps a young woman explore alternatives, build self-esteem, and set goals for her future.

These areas of human needs are the basis used in the decision-making of a young woman in planning for the quality of life she desires for herself and her child.

In addition to our resident program, we serve young women in community services who do not choose to live in a resident program.

When a young, unmarried woman experiences an unplanned pregnancy, she is faced with a number of important decisions. We feel that she must explore in-depth the availability of these alternatives. She knows she has four choices: marriage, and we feel she must have in-depth counseling in exploring marriage and a lasting relationship in a marriage; single parenthood, and she needs in-depth counseling in terms of parenting and what is involved in parenting and what it means to be a parent to a child.

Abortion: we feel that many young women today have not had the opportunity to explore the effects of abortion on themselves in the future. We see many young women who come to our agency following a previous abortion, saying that they did not know that services existed such as the one we represent. They say their friends have gone the abortion route and they wish they had had an opportunity to give a child life. It almost seems that some of the young women have an early pregnancy following an abortion to replace the child that they have lost.

Consideration of adoption as a positive alternative and the understanding of the adoptive process by young women and young, adopted children seems to have been critically lacking in the past few years. Also, having many of the unknowns removed and having open, flexible discussions of what it means to be placed for adoption and what it means to place a child has likewise not been practiced in recent years.

The adoption option must be promoted. It is essential that we all work to inform and educate the general public through active use of the media about the positive approaches to serving pregnant adolescents and providing adoption services.

So often, young women in our agency say, "It is difficult to find resources. We know all about abortion because it is on the billboards. We can have an abortion financed and paid for by medicaid, but we cannot have services or medical care during our pregnancy paid for by medicaid unless we have been certified as a member of an AFDC family."

We have much push by our young women to let it be known about adoption. We have young women who meet adoptive parents; we have young women who meet adoptees. And they really discuss what the services provide, which makes it a positive experience and feeling.

We are doing our best through outreach--radio and television--and we do have a 24-hour toll-free hotline. Following the article in People, we have had calls from all over the United States from young women who say, "Is there a facility like yours in our area? We would like to find a place not just to sit out a pregnancy, but a place to put our lives back together and plan for the future for ourselves and our children."

I hope this hearing on the positive option of adoption can be used for further deliberations by the Senate in deciding how it might promote infant adoption, thus keeping many children from appearing as older, harder to place children at a later date.

Thank you for this opportunity to share the views of many who are too often silent, but who know that adoption is a good alternative for young pregnant women and their families.

[The prepared statement fo Mrs. Piester follows:]

TESTIMONY OF RUBY LEE PIESTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE EDNA GLADNEY HOME, FORT WORTH, TEX.

My name is Ruby Lee Piester, and I am executive director of The Edna Gladney Home, a private, non-profit agency located in Fort Worth, Texas. The Edna Gladney Home is a residential service for young, pregnant women and includes an accredited maternity hospital and a junior high and high school. It is also a licensed adoption agency. I am pleased to appear before this Senate Subcommittee to discuss the positive option of adoption for young, single and troubled parents and their families. We are all concerned by the increasing numbers of teenagers who are engaging in sexual relations and the corresponding increase in the number of teenage pregnancies. Yet despite this growing trend, adoption as an alternative to abortion or adolescent parenthood has received little attention from our country's leaders—in either the political or social spheres of our society. I am glad to have this opportunity to share with the distinguished members of this Senate Subcommittee and its Chairman, Senator Denton, my views—based upon the past 18 years of experience in serving pregnant girls—of how positive and essential the social institution of adoption is for today's pregnant adolescents.

I would like to begin my testimony by describing the services offered by The Edna Gladney Home. We—the Board of Directors and the staff—believe that our services are unique and of high professional standards and that Gladney is one of a kind in the country. The Edna Gladney Home has an 84-year history during which thousands of pregnant girls and their families have received support and services throughout an unplanned pregnancy. Over 14,000 babies have been placed with adoptive parents during this period of time. Last year, the Home provided residential care and services to 377 young, pregnant women. For its services to pregnant women and its infant adoption program, The Edna Gladney Home does not receive any financial support from governmental or United Way sources. The 1980 budget for The Edna Gladney Home was over two-and-a-half million dollars. In its nonprofit capacity, it has to rely on sources of funds from fees from resident girls (21 percent), fees from adoptive parents (58 percent) and charitable contributions and private foundation funds (21 percent). Detailed information on the various services of The Edna Gladney Home is attached at Appendix a.

At Gladney we begin with the needs of young mothers. This program has been an everchanging one which offers flexibility and a depth of relationship with skilled casework staff that help the young women explore alternatives, build self-esteem and set goals for their futures. These areas of human needs are the basis used in the decisionmaking process for the young mother in planning for the quality of life she desires for her child and for herself. During 1979 we received 3,220 inquiries and attempted to make appropriate referrals if our services were not appropriate. In addition to the nearly 400 young women served in our residential program, another 200 girls received services through the Community Services program. Three hundred and seventy-five girls chose to make an adoption plan for their babies.

When a young unmarried woman experiences an unplanned pregnancy she is faced with a number of important decisions. She must explore the alternatives available to her for resolving an outcome for the unplanned pregnancy. She has four choices: 1. Marriage; 2. Adoption; 3. Single parenthood; and 4. Abortion. The best illustration I can give you as to how the servcies of The Edna Gladney Home provide a young woman with the opportunity to make the best plan for her child and for herself is to share one woman's experiences in her own words. The story of Penny's decision that adoption was the best alternative clearly illustrates The Edna Gladney Home's purpose to provide young pregnant women with a supportive environment so that they can make the decision that is right for them. Penny's story is attached at Appendix B.

The purpose of my testimony is to present a number of issues that need to be addressed in order to assure that adoption is viewed by our society as a positive alternative. I will not recite the statistics on the so-called adolescent pregnancy "epidemic" as I know that this Subcommittee has already held hearings on this issue in relationship to the role of family planning programs. I do want to say one thing about the question of "Why are so many young women getting pregnant out-of-wedlock?" I do not believe—and my professional experiences bear this out—that there are a set of psychological problems which most pregnant girls have which make them more vulnerable to becoming pregnant. All of the pathological or moral

reasons given do not produce a pregnancy. Pregnancy is due to the biological union between a man and a woman. And, unfortunately, increasing numbers of young women are engaging in sexual intercourse—or are making just one "mistake". These are the girls which must be served appropriately so that the pregancy is not seen as the problem that is "taken care of", but rather that the girl is seen as the person in need of support and services to resolve the unplanned pregnancy in a way which will result in the best and brightest future for her baby and for herself. It is my professional view that adoption serves many young women in the best way possible.

ADOPTION HAS MANY BENEFITS FOR SOCIETY

The Edna Gladney Home is a charter member agency of the national organization, the National Committee For Adoption, and I am the Vice-Chairman of its Board of Directors. Together, The Gladney Home with 17 other charter member agencies and nearly 1,000 individual members of the National Committee For Adoption, are working to re-direct the viewpoints of many who feel that infant adoption is no longer a viable social institution. We believe that adoption is a positive way to build families and that there is a strong desire on the part of many married couples to provide children—who may not have been born to them—a permanent, loving home and positive environment from which to grow up into productive, secure adults. These parents offer other parents—often young, unmarried and ill-prepared for the responsibilities of parenthood—a resource for a better future for their babies. It is time to begin stressing the positive benefits to society when adoption is the plan of the teenage mother.

The best way I know to illustrate how positive adoption as a family building option can be is to share the point of view from all three sides of the adoptive triangle—biological mother, adoptive parent, and adoptee. From a resident at our apartment: "I feel like I have made a very good decision in coming here. It's good for me and it's good for the future of my baby. It will have the chance to live in a normal home situation with two parents who love it and can give it things I can't."

From an adoptive mother to "the Gladney girls": "There is a bond between us—the bond of love for the child. What can you give that we cannot? You give life! And there is within you a love that is strong enough to enable you to place your children in our arms in order that we may be complete families."

And from an adopted child's letter to the agency: "I am writing to you for several reasons. The first is to give you a paragraph that I would dearly like to send my natural mother and father. (I live with my "real" mother and father!) I would like to tell them, whoever they are that I appreciate the care they have for me that motivated them to give me up in hopes that I might have a better life than they felt they could offer me. I want them to know that I am very happy in my home and that I feel very happy about the way I am being raised. My voice may be small, but I thought that you could use that in your work. Maybe it will give some young mother the courage to give up her child to a family that can take good care of her child and would very much like to do so."

From these personal statements, I believe that a better understanding of how adoption can benefit children of young parents can be gleaned. And it is important to remember that adoption is a service for children in need of capable, loving parents, not a service to provide infertile couples with a child.

Adoption benefits society by ensuring that couples, approved through a professional study procedure, are capable of providing the love and security of a permanent home. Couples, unable to bear children of their own, do not have a "right" to an adopted child. Certain requirements for adoptive couples which our agency follows include: a minimum marriage of three years, no more than one previous marriage for each marriage partner, a medical work-up for infertility or sterility, between the ages of 24 and 39, and no more than one child, at least 2 years of age, in the home. Because there are so many childless couples, these requirements are established to try to serve as many as possible but with a respect for the desire of the young mother, that her baby be placed with parents who are stable and capable of caring for her bably than she is at this time. Increased demand for infant adoption has brought disappointment to many wonderful prospective adoptive parents. At the same time it has provided adoption agencies the opportunities to approve the finest homes.

One of the essential services adoption agencies can provide adoptive parents is the encouragement to recognize the strength of the biological mother who chose the alternative to give life to their child and an opportunity for stable, loving adoptive parents, by sharing with biological mothers at the residence, many adoptive parents—as well as the young mothers—get to meet "each other" (although not the

parents of their child) and thereby have a chance to understand more clearly the positive nature of the decision to adopt.

The best bearers of good tidings are those who are personally involved. That is why I am hopeful that more adoptive parents will join us professionals and opinion-makers in describing to others the positive benefits of adoption. I am pleased that adoptive parents, such as Rev. George Clements, and Mr. Peter Forsythe, have been invited to discuss this topic with the Subcommittee at this hearing.

ADOLESCENT PARENTHOOD HAS MANY COSTS FOR SOCIETY

In 1979, the cost for one teen mother and her baby to society in terms of direct government costs was nearly $19,000. Pregnant teenagers have an 80 percent drop-out rate, as against less than 9 percent for other students. (At Gladney all young women continue their education or training while in residence.) Dependency upon family and upon welfare causes many teenage parents to lose all hope of becoming productive and self-supporting adult citizens. Even if medical costs are continued to be reimbursed by governments for young mothers' care and that of their babies, approximately 85 percent of the costs related to teenage pregnancy could be avoided through an active program which promotes adoption as an option. The social and financial costs of children attempting to raise children can no longer be taken for granted.

None of the researches to date have found that teenage parenting is a positive solution to an unplanned, adolescent pregnancy. Yet, young pregnant women continue to choose single parenthood in 96 out of 100 cases. What are the ramifications of these young parents' decisions to try to parent? The child abuse and neglect programs and the foster care programs are the direct recipients of children who are not being cared for adequately—or at all—by teenage parents.

The evidence in a paper prepared by Dr. E. Kinard and Dr. L. Klerman, "Teenage Parenting and Child Abuse: Are They Related?" (American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 50(3) July, 1980) ". . . indicates that the proportion of mothers who gave birth as teenagers is higher in child abusing families than in the general population, thus suggesting an association between adolescent pregnancy and child abuse." (pg. 487) The authors go on to state that the social background characteristics of child abusers are similar to those often cited for adolescent parents including: single parent families, alcohol abuse, parental rejection, and premature infants.

These characteristics also often apply to the kinds of families whose children enter the foster care systems—and who too often never leave. According to studies of the foster care system, too many young parents have "given parenting a try" and have then relied upon the foster care system to care for their infants.

In a study of the New York City foster care system, it was reported that 22.7 percent of all children in the system came into care as infants. These children, who would not during their infancy be considered "hard-to-place", are the very children who develop mental and physical "special needs" as they become older and remain in foster care longer, requiring more expensive special adoption services and subsidies for parents willing to provide them with permanent homes. It seems that the youngest children in foster care were born to teenage parents having their first children, and the maternal and paternal involvement is low. ("Children Discharged from Foster Care" Professor David Fanshel, Child Welfare, Sept./Oct. 1978)

Not only would the infants be better off if placed for adoption sooner, but so also would so many of today's young women. These young parents should be offered the opportunity to reassess their situations, voluntarily relinquish their rights to the child they cannot take adequate care of, and then be supported in the efforts to continue their education and training and to prepare for definite plans for a self-sufficient future. While considering the adoption option is better done prior to the child's birth, programs need to be established to encourage and support young mothers who realize months after their baby's birth that they are unprepared for the responsibilities of parenthood. Adoption is a better alternative than long-term foster care and young mothers and their families need to be helped to realize the benefits of such a decision both for the baby and the young mother—and ultimately society.

EXCELLENT CARE FOR GIRLS AND THEIR BABIES REQUIRES FUNDING

In March of this year, the National Committee For Adoption organized a two-day conference for its members and other involved in providing services to unmarried parents. Representatives from 30 agencies located in 17 states met on the campus of The Edna Gladney Home to discuss common concerns and to share program ideas. While the topics for discussion ranged from the national image of residential services for unmarried girls to the mutually supportive role adoptive parents, adoptees

and pregnant girls can play for each other, the special concern of all of the program directors in attendance was: How can we serve pregnant girls best with limited financial resources available to our agencies? In those instances (and there are many) where the resident unwed mother does not have the resources to meet the cost of the services, The Edna Gladney Home makes up the deficit using contributions we receive from charitable sources. Not all maternity homes have been as fortunate as Gladney to have generous charitable contributors in the community which assist in caring for these young women.

In terms of health care alone, prematurity has cost the Federal government for medical costs to teens in excess of $1 billion a year. For many, private, nonprofit agencies which do not use Federal government funds, the cost of delivery and neonatal care for premature babies is often "the last straw" which results in closing down the maternity home service. The provision of excellent care and services (especially medical care) for girls and their babies must be assured through government and third-party funding sources.

In the Report of the Select Panel for the Promotion of Child Health: "Better Health for Our Children: A National Strategy", it is recommended that the definitions of health care be expanded in the case of teenage pregnancy. Especially cited in the report is the need to expand the coverage of the "unborn child" provision for Medicaid for all States, and the importance of encouraging third party and employment based insurance plans to recognize the pregnant adolescent's health needs as part of a family's health plan. To that end, the Select Panel recommends that Congress establish a Board on Health Services Standards to serve a variety of functions aimed at improving the content, quality and availability of health services for mothers and children. Highly organized health services are needed for teenage mothers—and special training and sensitivity is essential from health care providers serving young women who are making an adoption plan for their baby. Perhaps the establishment of a Health Services Standards Board could assist in bringing attention to the significant costs—and benefits—involved in the provision of health, residential and social care for pregnant, teenage mothers.

Evidence has existed since the 1950's that lack of resources to care for the unmarried mother during her pregnancy is one of the major factors which has led to the continuing and growing use of the gray and black markets for adoption. Lawyers, doctors, and other intermediaries force adoptive parents to pay excessive fees in order to cover all of the costs—plus "additional expenses" of caring for the mother during her pregnancy and for the medical costs of delivering the baby. Young pregnant girls without other recourse agree to relinquish their babies in exchange for financial and health assistance—and privacy. In order to best serve the interests of the baby to be born, adequate protections to the young mother must be assured. The pressures of financial dependency upon prospective adoptive parents is not an appropriate way to serve adolescent mothers. Governmental sources of funding—as well as private insurance plans and charitable contributions—needs to support services to unmarried parents. Such support represents a "dual child" welfare service—serving the welfare of the child as mother and the child as baby of the mother-child.

NON-AGENCY SERVICES SHOULD BE ELIMINATED

Adolescent pregnancy is a situation that can destroy many young women's lives. It makes for great concern that young pregnant women all over the country are sitting in isolation and fear, feeling guilty, lonely, sorry, hopeless and with a very negative self-image, just waiting for their baby to be born. The role of agencies employing professional workers is essential to maintain a young woman's self worth and independence to make the right decision about her unplanned pregnancy. The solution to an unplanned pregnancy is not just a technological-medical procedure like abortion, or a financial arrangement such as an intermediary-arranged adoption. Services directed at the young woman must be provided—and agencies provide them most consistently. When making an adoption decision, the role of a licensed adoption agency is very important. Non-agency adoption services and poor quality services to young, pregnant women should be eliminated by stressing the benefits of professional agency services.

One of the most disturbing provisions of the Proposed Model State Adoption Act published last February, 1980 (and there were many disturbing parts to that Act) was the legalization of independent adoptions. The "logic" behind this decision escapes me, but it stated that ". . . prohibiting independent adoptions might divert scarce needs (read resources) to the placement of infants." Any resources being used to assist young pregnant women in making an adoption plan for their baby—and for the placement of that baby in an approved adoptive home—can hardly be considered diversion from something more important. The National Committee For Adop-

tion includes among its goals "To work for the elimination of non-agency adoption of infants." This is also a goal all governmental bodies, voluntary associations and religious organizations should be working toward if there is any hope of seeing the adoption option more widely accepted as providing positive benefits to young women and their families and to society.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITH MANY GROUPS ARE NECESSARY

The current attention on teenage pregnancy has been focused on educating young people to become adequate parents, in large measure due to the tendency of young people during the last decade to try and raise their children. This attention must be re-focused, however. For example, a resource kit for education for parenthood recently prepared by two major national organizations concerned about adolescent pregnancy, the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation and the National Parents and Teachers Association, is entitled: "How to Help Children Become Better Parents". Now is that really a goal that can be achieved? Can children be good parents? Do we want children to be parents, How often is adoption presented as a positive way to build families? These are all questions which we must work together to answer. Coordination and cooperation with all organizations and agencies concerned with teenage pregnancies must occur, so that the adoption option is widely understood and positively presented.

There has been success achieved in certain comprehensive, multi-disciplinary programs. For example, Eunice Kennedy Shriver recently described the outcome of the projects funded by the HHS sponsored adolescent pregnancy program in this way: "Repeat pregnancies can be reduced by almost two-thirds, welfare dependency can be greatly lessened, and the incidence of child abuse can be vastly diminished." (N.Y. Times 3/1/81) But these successes imply that pregnant adolescents must raise their children. Shouldn't the adoption option decision be considered a positive outcome as well?

As a professional social worker, I am encouraged by the proposed policy statement on "problem pregnancies" being considered by the National Association for Social Workers as a substitute for their policy statement on abortion. The proposed statement carefully outlines the important role professional social workers must play—and indeed do—in counseling women with problem pregnancies. Alternatives are to be discussed, although adoption is not specifically mentioned. But perhaps upon further discussion, a recognition of the adoption option can be included in the final statement.

The attitudes of others play such an important part in making the adoption decision a positive one for a young mother. For example, many hospital maternity wards have established negative policies for serving young women who are planning on adoption for their baby. Signs are placed on their doors "No information patient". Remarks are made about how cruel they must be to "give their baby away". Girls are not allowed to see the baby or to ask anything about how the baby is. This kind of treatment makes the adoption decision even more painful . . . and will probably result in no final positive resolution about the adoption decision, unless special counseling and support is provided to the girl. These examples and more can be given to illustrate the importance of opening up the discussion and working together or promoting adoption among the many helping professional and service organizations.

RESEARCH ON THE ADOPTION OPTION IS NEEDED

In 1980 a review of the literature on "Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood" was prepared by Dr. Susan Phipps-Yonas, supported by funds from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, HHS. Dr. Phipps-Yonas reviewed over 250 articles in a variety of medical, public health and social work journals and discovered that: "An issue that has received too little attention is adoption and the recent dramatic increase in the probability that an unmarried teenager would retain her infant." (American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 50(3) July, 1980 pg. 423) Indeed, out of 177 references cited in the article, only six related to adoption. Research is needed to discover what factors make the adoption option the best decision for certain young, unmarried pregnant women. In the case of my own agency, there are thousands of files over several decades which could be used as a useful data base for such a study. As a direct service agency, we have not been able to divert attention to the important one of "researching" our cases. But it should be done, not only at The Edna Gladney Home, but at several large residential and community services programs for unmarried parents located around the country.

The emphasis on research which has been included in S. 1090, the Adolescent Family Life bill, is a step in the right direction. Even the programs which have been

funded under the current program have yet to be carefully reviewed to see what services are necessary to provide an optimal, comprehensive services program for pregnant adolescents. The involvement of the Federal government in conducting practical research on the option of adoption would be invaluable.

THE ADOPTION OPTION MUST BE PROMOTED

It is essential that we all work to inform and educate the general public, through active use of the media, about the positive approaches to serving pregnant adolescents and providing adoption services. So often the young women who come to our residence program comment about the importance of letting other girls know that such programs exist. They often say, "We know all about abortion. There are billboards along the highway telling us where to go for an abortion. There should be billboards telling us about The Edna Gladney Home." We are doing our best through outreach programs, radio and television ads, and a 24-hour toll free hotline service, but we need to do more.

I hope this hearing on the positive option of adoption can be used for further deliberations by the Senate in deciding how it might promote infant adoption more forcefully. Thank you for this opportunity to share the view of many—who are too often silent—but who *know* that adoption is a good alternative for young pregnant women and their families.

[Appendix A]

CURRENT PROGRAM OF THE EDNA GLADNEY HOME

NATURAL PARENT

Unmarried parenthood can occur in any family; it produces or complicates family problems. For the unmarried parent, it can result in school drop-out, the withdrawal of financial and or emotional support by her family, and confusion in relationships. The Edna Gladney Home, in recognition of all these factors, offers a comprehensive service to the unmarried parent and her family. Special attention is given the teenage mother and services are available to the baby's father as well.

Even in the most secure and loving circumstances, pregnancy is an awesome, sobering reality of life. For the expectant mother who is unmarried, the thought of facing a full-term pregnancy alone can be devastating.

The Edna Gladney Home offers prompt supportive help to natural mothers seeking guidance and practical assistance. A phone call or letter initiates action. Telephone calls are handled 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Our responsibility is to describe fully the alternatives available to each young woman. The professionals on our staff offer thorough, objective counseling so that she is aware of potential drawbacks and advantages of each alternative. Once she has a comprehensive knowledge of her possible choices, she can make the decision she believes is best for her and her child.

EDUCATION

The Edna Gladney Home has established through the cooperation with the Fort Worth Independent School District a fully accredited Junior and Senior High School program on the campus. The girls who have not graduated from high school are encouraged to enroll in this program. These courses are of the same academic nature as those taught in any other public school. To protect a girl's confidentiality, her transcript will be kept at a local high school. When a young woman graduates from our school, we have a beautiful graduation ceremony. All residents are encouraged to take part in courses of enrichment such as ceramics, arts and crafts, and gardening in our greenhouse.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

In addition to the junior high school and senior high school program, The Edna Gladney Home has established three primary vocational courses of its own. We have a training course in PBX which most girls are able to complete in the limited time they are with us. Through the cooperation of IBM we have a training program in keypunch, which is very popular with the residents. The third and most popular is that of secretarial skills. Successful completion of any of these courses will qualify the graduates for employment.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Duncan Memorial Hospital serves the medical needs of the Edna Gladney Home. The 19 bed, 26 bassinet facility is a fully accredited, completely equipped private hospital with a staff of 64 that provides comprehensive medical care for both mother and child. Located on campus, this setting allows for close relationships between the patients and the staff. A unique arrangement with Harris Hospital Methodist and Fort Worth Children's Hospital provides care for the mother or infant with special needs.

INFANT ADOPTION

Many fine young couples were able to have the fulfillment of a complete family through adoption. A mature, loving, stable family carefully chosen for the quality of their family potential offers a proven pathway for a life time of well-being for a child. A skilled professional staff considers each request for adoption services on an individual basis. The demand for infants has necessitated many qualified couples to endure a long wait. This has prompted more prospective parents to exp-lore adoption of older children or children with special needs.

Post-Adoptive services are provided by the social work staff and clinical psychologist through seminars, auxiliary visitation and individual counseling.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Community Services Division provides services to non-residents. This program was developed with flexibility and an awareness of the needs of young women who cannot use the resident program as a resource. Both in-patient and out-patient services are available.

NEW HOPE

New Hope is a very special project because it deals with children with special problems. Thanks to New Hope, these children find the love and support of a new family. Our primary concern is to find the right family for the right child.

Adoption is a unique way of bringing together parents who want children and children who need parents. The relationship developed between the family and the agency is especially meaningful, and if problems arise after legal adoption, it is natural that the adoptive parents and child return for consultation. Family and children are helped to put monor problems in perspective and to cope with more serious ones. In these situations there is no substitute for the expert knowledge developed by The Edna Gladney Home.

ADULT ADOPTEE ASSOCIATION

Membership is open to all adopted men and women who have reached the age of eighteen years. The organization was formed to aid in the education of the public about adoption. Our members have been active in public speaking, in direct services to expectant parents and in working to promote adoption as a positive way to build a family. The organization wishes to protect the rights to confidentiality of biological parents who make adoptive plans for their child. There adoptees have provided input that is of great assistance to The Home in planning to meet the needs of those who seek our services.

ADOPTIVE GRANDPARENTS ASSOCIATION

Men and women who have a grandchild adopted from The Edna Gladney Home have joined to form an organization in support of the services of The Home. These members of the adoptive family are vitally interested in the quality of adoptive services, positive legislation that will provide sound practices in adoption and in the continuing success of The Home. Our members have participated in legislative matters both state and national that would affect adoption and children's services, as volunteers at The Home, in auxiliary projects and in sharing their love and resources to meet the needs of The Home. Each year a selection is made from the members for the honor of Grandparents of the Year.

AUXILIARIES

We have over 1600 volunteer members in The Edna Gladney Home auxiliaries and outreach task force groups. These mem and women will interpret agency services, raise funds to support those services, provide direct services to expectant parents and work toward positive legislation to protect the members of the adoptive

triangle. Without the dedication of these individuals who know and understand the services of The Home, we could not exist. We are deeply grateful to these volunteers, many of whom are adoptive parents, adoptive grandparents and adopted children.

Auxiliaries

Abilene, Acadiana, Amarillo, Austin, Baton Rouge, Coastal Bend, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, Little Rock, Longview, Lubbock, New Orleans, NY/NJ/CT, Oklahoma City, Pennsylvania, Permian Basin, San Antonio, San Francisco, Southwest Texas, Tarrant County, Tulsa, Tyler, Valley, and Wichita Falls.

Outreach Task Force Groups

Bryan, Center, Nacogdoches, Temple/Waco, Texarkana, and Victoria.

[Appendix B]

PENNY'S DECISION: A DIARY OF HER STAY AT GLADNEY

Lately there have been many movies and books written about young umarried girls who have gotten pregnant and don't know what to do with their babies. Some of the stories end with them having abortions, some keep their babies, some find that adoption is a far better alternative in most circumstances. I did.

Just before Christmas in 1976 I got married. Rick and I had been engaged for almost a year. We lived with his parents at the time. We planned on staying with them until we graduated from high school in the spring. That didn't work out too well. We moved to a rent house and later to an apartment.

Rick had one major flaw, his Father. His family was pure Louisiana Cajun. They were close knit and believed that what Daddy said was law.

I hadn't had a father since I was twelve years old. Mother ruled the roost, worked, and taught us to make our own decisions and stand by them.

Marrying into this family was like being locked in a closet and having someone throw away the key. We separated once and then six months later decided to divorce.

We each took a car, a couple of pieces of furniture, and went our separate ways. I went to college for part of a semester then decided I was too poor and joined the United States Air Force.

I made it half way through basic training before I found out I was pregnant.

Something you have to understand is that I was a virgin when I married Rick and Mother just didn't talk too much about "You'll know you're pregnant when . . ." I had been on the pill until we moved into our apartment and the doctor had told me not worry too much if coming off the pill messed up my monthly cycle. So I didn't worry and here I was 3½ months pregnant and being discharged from the Air Force. The doctors at Lackland kind of laughed and told me to come back after I had done something about my pregnancy. Abortion? No I didn't think so.

My first reaction was "Go back to Rick". His first reaction was "Is it my baby?" Cancel my first reaction.

My second reaction was "I'll keep it by myself then, you creep."

I got a part time job as a telephone solicitor for AAA Auto Club. I was living at my mother's and could walk to work. I made $3.50 an hour plus one dollar for every appointment I could set up for the salesmen. The doctor bill was going to run $800 and the hospital bill more than that. I had no friends with old baby clothes or furniture; Ricky was in no way going to help and my family was by no stretch of the imagination rich. Cancel my second reaction.

Now in all fairness to my family they wanted me to keep the baby and would have done everything they could to help me. It was my own decision to go the Edna Gladney Home in Fort Worth, Texas.

My mother got me their "Hot Line" number. The switchboard connected me with an intake worker. I don't remember her name but I do remember she put me completely at ease within a few minutes. "How far along was I? How did I feel about adoption? When would I like to come?" Most of all she listened while I talked. When I mentioned money, mainly to tell her I didn't have any, she told me not to worry about it. We could work it out when I got to Gladney.

The weekend after my birthday I was on a plane for Fort Worth. I took a cab to 2300 Hemphill. I'm sure I was the strangest passenger the driver had that day. I was nervous to distraction, totally lost and scared to death. I didn't know one person in this town, I had very little money and I was, without question, pregnant.

When I walked in the door with my heavy suitcase three pregnant girls converged on me to help me carry all of my stuff. I felt instantly accepted an much more at ease. Another pregnant girl took me to my intake worker, the same one I had talked to on the phone. I thought Lord they are all pregnant—this is weird! I almost laughed until I saw a little twelve year old girl sitting across from me with her

mother. At that age I had been playing with Barbie dolls and in Girl Scouts. The sight of that little girl and her mother has stayed with me and it made me realize that this happens to girls from all walks of life and all ages.

When it came my turn to talk to my intake worker my first thought was "Thank God she's not pregnant". I spent about an hour with her, chose a "new" last name and made an appointment to see her the next day. During those two days she learned everthing there was to know about my family history, most of my interests, likes, dislikes and what kind of home I wanted my baby to have. She even learned what colors I like and didn't like. This was used to place my baby in the right home.

For the next few days I took tests and got settled in. There was always someone there to talk to or to show me what was going on. After that days got busy.

Gladney keeps a secretarial teacher on staff and I took full advantage of the free courses that were offered. I took bookkeeping, refresher typing, girl Friday and keypunch courses.

In the afternoons I worked with Althea Giles who was the Public Relations director at the time. I did a little typing, a little filing and took messages when she was out of the office. It was through Althea that I was introduced to Gladney's Outreach program. Once or twice a month two of the girls would go to different high schools, clubs, or auxiliaries in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. We were always accompanied by a counselor to answer technical questions and I like to think we always got our point across. The point being there is another alternative besides the ones our society so readily offers us.

The evenings were our own. We would play games, watch T.V., read, talk or do the "Hustle" in the large community living room. This, I tell you, was a sight to see.

Another sight to see was our weekly grocery shopping trip. The older girls, one out of high school, were assigned to apartments. Once a week we would turn in a menu for the next week and go grocery shopping. You haven't lived till you get 15-20 pregnant women together to go grocery shopping. We would run back and forth telling each other what was on special or making smart remarks about how much someone was getting. We had a budget we had to stick to and most of us would have to rush around putting something back before we were through.

Besides our weekly grocery shopping we also had opportunities each week to go to a Mall and shop or bowling or to a movie. There was always something to do. We had, while I was there, a fantastic Christmas party, complete with Santa Claus and all kinds of presents, a beautiful Easter Service, picnics, and field trips to many of Fort Worth and Dallas' historic sites. We were like a big sorority and we were all sisters.

Of course Gladney was not just interested in us having a good time. Once a week we met individually with our counselor to talk about what we were feeling or just to tell her what we had been doing all week. Three times a week we had group meetings. I remember some of these sessions being really hard but very good for us. We all grew emotionally during our stay at Gladney.

Physically we were well taken care of. Gladney has a private hospital on the grounds. It is staffed by a group of wonderful nurses that are there 24 hours a day. Clinics were on Tuesday's and Thursday's and you were scheduled just as if you were going to a "normal" clinic. The closer you got to your delivery date the more often you went. The doctors, who could have made us feel embarrassed or ashamed, were always kind and understanding.

One of the things all of us were interested in was what kind of home our babies were going to. We met during my five month stay at Gladney, at least 6 adoptive couples, two young and two older adoptive children from Gladney and through Outreach met many couples on Gladney's waiting list. It quieted many of my fears to know that these were the kind of people Gladney chose for their babies.

On June 10, 1977, I was scheduled to go on an Outreach program to one of the Dallas Auxiliaries of Gladney. I woke up feeling lousy and depressed for some reason. My room mate, who was a nurse, told me to go anyway, that it would cheer me up. So I went. I have always felt the Lord sent me on that particular Outreach. It was with a group of women that were on Gladney's waiting list for babies. By the time the program was over we were all crying and hugging each other. We thanked them, they thanked us and we just started crying all over. It made me feel very sure that I was doing the right thing. When I got back to Fort Worth I had a terrible back ache but I was very content. Later that evening my room mate made me go to the hospital and get something for my back. She said something to the effect "I love you but I'm tired of hearing you say your back hurts so get yourself over to the hospital and get something for it before I wring your neck". The nurse informed me I was in labor and was going to have to stay. I decided I had changed my mind and didn't want to have a baby after all. I would remain terminally pregnant until I screwed up more courage.

At 10:20 the evening of the 11th, the doctor finally had to take the baby by c-section. It was 7 lb. 10 oz. girl. I had been warned that they might have to do a c-section and everything had been explained to me long before so it didn't worry me too much. I knew all these people and felt safe with them. I remember going under the sodium penethol and thinking "I hope I don't say anything stupid" and than I remember my room mate standing at the door of the recovery room in a hospital gown saying "Penny, guess what? Penny, Hello, Penny." I drifted off to sleep and when I woke up again she was being wheeled in the same room. There were times I though I was going to split my stitches if she didn't quit making me laugh.

Three days later we were told we could see our babies if we wanted to. Early that morning we got up and got dressed. Our counselors came to talk to us, or let us talk to them. I had had a lot of time to think about what I was going to do. One of the nurses took me to a small room. Julie, my counselor, came with me, and I signed the adoption papers for my baby. I don't remember now what they said or what I swore to. I remember standing there crying and praying for the last time that what I was doing was right. Afterwards I was allowed to see my baby.

I should tell you that I could have seen my baby before I signed the final papers. I chose to sign the papers first because I did not want my decision to be based on emotion. I had thought through both sides and I knew, and still know, that I was doing the right thing.

After I signed the papers Julie took me to a sitting room. There was an old fashioned rocking chair and a couch, a couple of tables, maybe a lamp. The nurse brought in my baby and I started crying all over again. Julie stayed with me while I checked for fingers and toes and then left so I could talk to her. It may sound silly but I told her all the reasons for my giving her up for adoption. I told her I loved her and I wanted her to be happy. I told her what a good family she was going to have. Most of all I told her I loved her. Somehow I know that with the help of her adoptive parents and Gladney that she will realize that, and, perhaps, in a way, love me back.

Sitting there holding her and looking at her and knowing what kind of home she was to have and how many chances she would be given to get ahead I knew I had done the right thing.

Before I left Gladney I was told that my baby had gone into a Christian home, with both parents involved in church groups, both parents were college graduates, the mother didn't work and the father was a professional man. These were all the things that I had asked of the family in which my baby was placed. I also learned the color of the baby's nursery, what kind of home they had, what kind of sports they liked, and that they wanted me to know that they would love her as much as I did.

Perhaps it is because of my wonderful experience at Gladney, and it was wonderful, that I feel so strongly about abortion and young mothers keeping their babies. Perhaps the hardest thing I will ever have to do in my life was sign those adoption papers and yet I feel so much better knowing that somewhere there is a little three year old girl who has a loving mother and father. There is a family that is a little happier because of my decision.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Mrs. Piester. We will save our questions until we have had opening statements from all three.

Miss Greathouse?

Miss GREATHOUSE. I think the experience of the Children's Aid Society is probably representative of some of the things that have happened in adoption in the last few years.

We are a voluntary United Way Agency serving a three-county area around Birmingham. Adoption has been one of our services since the agency was founded in 1912. We are licensed as a child placement agency by the Alabama Department of Pensions and Security. We are fortunate to have good working relationships with other agencies and with parent groups in our area and have consulted with them in preparing to come here today.

My experience in adoption dates from 1962 when Children's Aid was expanding its adoption program. Our peak year for placements was 1969, when we placed 80 children. Most of these were white

infants. We also placed some black infants and an occasional older child.

There was a drop in children placed for adoption beginning in the early 1970's, and this seems to have bottomed out a couple of years ago at 22 children placed. We are placing at a higher rate this year, but the increase is primarily in children other than white infants.

We are actively recruiting homes for black children of all ages and for special needs children. Applicants for white infants now face a wait of at least 2 years just to get an application, and a total of four to 6 years before placement of a child.

The drop in number of placements is due to the change in children available rather than a lack of potential adoptive parents. This could lead to what I consider a dangerous attitude where agencies feel pushed to meet the needs of "deserving" adoptive parents and unmarried mothers are seen as suppliers of babies for these couples. We reject this approach. Our first obligation is to the child and to help the parent plan for the child's future in a responsible way.

Most, but not all, infants placed for adoption are children of young unmarried parents. As you probably know, more than 90 percent of these unmarried mothers are choosing to keep their children. Other parents, married and unmarried, who, for various reasons, cannot cope with the responsibilities of parenthood, also release children. Some do so voluntarily, while other terminations are at agency instigation.

These decisions, as well as legal termination of parental rights, are increasingly complicated and time consuming. We do not see a drastic change in trends that would mean a significant increase in the number of infants for adoption, and it is the opinion of our staff that doing away with abortion would not mean a corresponding increase in adoption.

I do agree that adoption should be presented as a positive alternative as one of the choices parents have to make.

The decrease in infant placements has had some positive results. Adoptive homes are now being found for older, handicapped, minority children, and others who would not otherwise have the opportunity to have a permanent home. Agencies have learned that the young, middle-class couples who traditionally came seeking to adopt babies are not often interested in these children.

Different types of homes are needed. Agencies must be more flexible and creative in their expectations and methods. The work is more difficult and expensive. If agencies are looking to fees from adoptive applicants as a source of income, this must be disregarded for special needs placements. Indeed, these are the children for whom subsidy is often needed. Agencies constantly have to explain why it is costing us more to place fewer children, and we have less income.

Adoptive parents are also looking to other sources for children. We are having an increase in intercountry adoptions. Another type of adoption which seems to be increasing is that of independent placements.

Adoption agencies are now providing more post-adoption services. Alabama is one of the states which has a more flexible law, which is, to us, a workable compromise.

Those of us who got our start in traditional baby adoptions may sometimes wish we could return to the good old days. In my opinion, this is not going to happen. We have had to reexamine our attitudes, policies and procedures. In the process, we have learned some things which we think will help our families. We are now focusing on preparation for adoptive parenthood rather than the investigative home study. We are no longer assuming that certain children are not placeable.

Adoption is a popular service and it always attracts interest and attention, but adoption by itself cannot stand alone. Without other child welfare services, medical care, better legal support, and adequate staff to do the job, many children may be denied the chance for a permanent home.

I am interested in the new adoption legislation that the committee is considering, but I think that legislation that will have a far greater impact is a law that was passed ust last year—Public Law 96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980. We are afraid that its long-needed reforms will lose their effectiveness under the present plan to include it in a block grant.

I appreciate your interest and attention.

[The prepared statement of Miss Greathouse follows.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOYCE GREATHOUSE, LCSW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

I am Joyce Greathouse, Executive Director of Children's Aid Society, Birmingham, Alabama. We are a voluntary, United Way agency serving a 3 county area. Adoption has been one our services since the agency was founded in 1912. We are licensed as a child-placing agency by the Alabama Department of Pensions & Security. We are fortunate to have good communication and cooperation with other agencies and adoptive parent's groups and I have consulted with them in preparing for this hearing.

My experience in adoption dates from 1962 when Children's Aid was expanding its adoption program. Our peak year for placements was 1969 with 80 children. Most of the children were White infants. We also placed some Black infants and an occasional older child. There was a drop beginning in the early 70's which seems to have bottomed out a couple of years ago at 22. We are placing at a higher rate this year but the increase is primarily in children other than White infants. We are actively recruiting homes for Black children of all ages and for special needs children. Applicants for White infants now face a wait of two years to get an application and a total of four to six years before placement.

The drop in the number of placements is due to the change in children available rather than a lack of potential adoptive parents. This could lead to what I consider a dangerous attitude where agencies feel pushed to meet the needs of so called "deserving" adoptive parents and unmarried mothers are seen as suppliers of babies for those couples. We reject this approach. Our first obligation is to the child and to help the parents plan for the child's future in a responsible way.

Most, but not all, infants placed for adoption are children of young unmarried parents. As you probably know, more than 90 percent of unmarried mothers are choosing to keep their children rather than release them for adoption. The increase in illegitimacy has not resulted in more adoptions. Other parents, married and unmarried, who for various reasons cannot cope with the responsibilities of parenthood, also release children. Some do so voluntarily while other terminations are at agency instigation. These decisions, as well as legal termination of parental rights, are increasingly complicated and time consuming. We are looking at ways to improve the effectiveness of our services and make them more accessible. We do not see a drastic change in trends that would mean a significant increase in the number of infants for adoption. It is the opinion of our staff that outlawing abortion would not mean a corresponding increase in adoption.

The decrease in infant placements has had some positive results. Adoptive homes are now being found for older, handicapped, and minority children and others who otherwise might not have had the opportunity of a permanent home. Agencies have learned that the young middle-class couples who traditionally came seeking to adopt babies are not often interested in these children. Different types of homes are needed. Agencies must be more flexible and creative in their expectations and methods. The work is more difficult and expensive. If agencies are looking to fees from adoptive applicants as a source of income this must be disregarded for special needs placements. Indeed, these are the children for whom subsidy is often needed. Agencies have to constantly explain why it is costing us to place fewer children and we have less income.

Adoptive parents are also looking to other sources for children. We are having an increase in intercountry adoptions. It has still been possible to get infants from some countries, especially Korea. Recent changes in policy there may eliminate most Korean adoptions. Some families have also become interested in providing homes for older Amerasian children. They are concerned about the plight of these children in Korea and are requesting support of HR808 introduced by Congressman Stewart McKinney. This would give mixed American—Korean children priority in the existing immigration law.

Another type of adoption which seems to be increasing is independent placements. According to our county Department of Pensions & Security office, the petitions they receive on independent placements are infants and many are 3rd party placements which are illegal in Alabama. Little is done about them. It is our observation that doctors, lawyers, and other non-agency people are unlikely to refer a mother wanting to place an infant to an agency unless there are problems or potential complications.

Adoption agencies are now providing more post-adoption services. Alabama is one of the states which has a more flexible law, which is, to us, a workable compromise. When an adoptee reaches legal age (19) he can return to the agency which placed him for information about himself and his background. The agency cannot release identifying information about the birth parents unless they can be located and give their permission. The Agency can then act as an intermediary if a reunion is decided upon. This service is only to those who have been placed by licensed adoption agencies. All adoptees have the right to their original birth certificate when they are of legal age. Birth parents do not have the reciprocal right to contact the child but we let them know that we will keep current information on them in file in case the child request this.

Those of us who got our start in traditional baby adoptions may sometimes wish we could return to the "good old days". In my opinion this is not going to happen. We have had to re-examine our attitudes, policies, and procedures. In the process we have learned some things which we think will help our families. We are now focusing on preparation for adoptive parenthood rather than the investigative home study. We are no longer assuming that certain children are not placeable.

Adoption is a popular service which always attracts interest and attention—but it cannot stand alone. Without other child welfare services, medical care, better legal support, and adequate staff, many children may be denied the chance for a permanent home. I am interested in the new adoption legislation this committee is considering. But I think that legislation which will have far greater impact is a law that was passed just last year—Public Law 272, the adoption assistance & Child Welfare Act of 1980. This is a good strong law. We are afraid its long-needed reforms will lose their efectiveness under the present plan to include it in the block grant.

I appreciate your attention and would be happy to entertain any questions.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Miss Greathouse.

Mr. Donlevy, do you have a statement?

Mr. DONLEVY. Yes.

Senator DENTON. Would you please summarize it, because there is another meeting scheduled in here at 1 and we do have another panel? Unfortunately, I have to chair something else.

I do not want to shorten anyone, but these statements will be available for the record. It is necessary, if we can, to summarize rather than read in detail. Your statement is not unduly long, however, so take your choice.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. DONLEVY. Thank you, Senator. I wish to express my appreciation to you for inviting me to testify on a very important matter; namely, infant adoption.

First of all, I, Catholic Family Services of the Diocese of Birmingham, Ala., and the National Conference of Catholic Charities strongly support adoption as one remediation of unwanted pregnancy. Further, I, Catholic Family Services, and the National Conference of Catholic Charities are unequivocally opposed to abortion.

The National Conference of Catholic Charities is an association of all of the Catholic social service agencies in the United States. There are 152 of these agencies, all of which provide services to families and children through approximately 1,500 branches and institutions. Almost all of the agencies have well-developed adoption services and foster care programs.

In 1980, these agencies served 51,797 unmarried mothers, provided adoption services to 44,597 persons, and completed 4,528 adoptions—many of these children with special needs.

My own agency, Catholic Family Services, received its license as a child-placing agency from the State of Alabama in 1928. We have, among other things, been placing children in adoption since that time.

I, myself, have been a practicing social worker for 25 years. In the 1950's and 1960's, there were more infants available for adoption than there were willing adoptive parents.

However, that picture has changed substantially. Each year for the past 5 years, Catholic Family Services has averaged 16 completed infant adoptions per year. We were limited by the number of children available for such placement. Yet, at the same time, each year Catholic Family Services has received between 450 and 500 inquiries from people who wish to adopt an infant.

Why is there this obvious dearth of infants available for adoption? There are many variables and I do not purport to know them all. However, I believe a few are worthy of mention.

The first one I would like to address is abortion. If one believes the fetus is a person, there is no way one could support abortion. As I have already stated, I believe that the fetus is a person, and therefore I believe abortion is murder.

On the other hand, if one believes the fetus is not a person and I believe there are people who sincerely believe this, I can understand that a sensitive, caring, and concerned person would lean toward supporting abortion, at least at first look.

However, as reasonable people let us examine both premises, not from the viewpoint of denying either, but rather from the viewpoint of preferred palatability from a universal rather than a parochial point of view.

Given our answer to this specific inquiry, we can address options available to both groups. If you support abortion as a solution to unwanted pregnancy, it appears to me that you would have to consider yourself infallible. Abortion has a finality about it that is indisputable, irrevocable, and allows for no error in judgment. Adoption, on the other hand, offers an alternative.

In reality, if the statistics of people in the Diocese of Birmingham wanting to adopt children are reflective of the situation na-

tionwide—and I believe they are—then there is no such thing as an unwanted child. Also, with adoption available as an alternative, we are not denying any woman freedom of choice. She is free to choose to be or not to be a parent.

I believe another variable to be considered is independent adoptions. The Model State Adoption Act encourages private placement while adding more regulations and stipulations to licensed adoption agencies. Adoption agencies, in accord with good practice, must do careful home studies before placing a child.

The Model State Adoption Act does not require that intermediaries in private adoptions meet licensing requirements or follow any minimum standards for adoptive placement, or engage in any sound child placing practices. Third party participants may be qualified in their own professions, but not in child welfare.

Counseling services must be offered to both birth parents and the adoptive parents prior to an adoption so that all the parties have the opportunity to work through all of their fears and their anxieties. Each person must feel secure that his or her decision is in the best interest of both the child and him or herself. Intermediaries are not trained in the skills required for effective counseling.

A third variable is a general disdain for the family construct that permeates our society today. There are many factors embodied in this condition, such as materialism, the "me first, last and always" attitude, and an overall lack of responsibility and dignity as it relates to sexual behavior.

Adults are giving children the idea that sex is all fun and games. We should be giving them the idea that sex is serious and profound, and that there are feelings and responsibility accompanying sexual behavior.

I would like to quote from an article that was published in the Chicago Sun Times recently. The author of the article is Arlene S. Uslander. Ms. Uslander teaches in a community school in the Chicago suburb of Skokie. She states, "I am not advocating a return to Victorian days when people were supposed to act as though sex did not exist. I am advocating that TV producers, writers and sponsors recognize and respond to the fact that before 10 p.m., more than half of the viewers are children—sensitive, suggestible children who imitate actors and actresses they see—and look up to—on television.

It really is high time the TV industry, and the mass media in general, start cleaning up their acts. If they do not, instead of playing party games like pin the tail on the donkey and musical chairs, kids will be playing pin the tail on Brooke Shields' backside and musical beds.

I suggest that if it is appropriate to be this harsh on the news and TV media, then we should be equally demanding of responsibility on the part of would-be professionals who, in my opinion, are recklessly distributing contraceptives and contraceptive information to children.

From my clinical experience with children over the years, and there are studies to support this, there has been increased sexual acting out among our children, as there has been increased availability of and supposed education in the use of contraceptive devices.

Finally, I would like to make the following recommendations: stop so-called legalized abortion and, in the interim, stop the use of Federal money for funding abortions. Stop independent adoptions. Stop Federal funding of the distribution of contraceptives to children.

Concentrate on making certain that all Federal policies and programs support the family and strengthen, not weaken, the fabric of the American family, and concentrate on a national program advertising the strength and beauty of the family construct.

Senator Denton, I thank you for your attention.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Donlevy follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RAYMOND E. DONLEVY, M.S.W., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CATHOLIC FAMILY SERVICES OF THE DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Panel. I am Raymond E. Donlevy, Executive Director of Catholic Family Services of the Diocese of Birmingham, Alabama. I wish to express my appreciation to you for inviting me to testify on a very important matter—namely, infant adoptions.

Before getting into the substance of my testimony I would like to make two things very clear. First of all I, Catholic Family Services of the Diocese of Birmingham, Alabama and the National Conference of Catholic Charities strongly support adoption as one remediation of unwanted pregnancy. Further, I, Catholic Family Services and the National Conference of Catholic Charities are unequivocally opposed to abortion.

The National Conference of Catholic Charities is an association of all of the Catholic social service agencies in the United States. There are 152 of these agencies all of which provide services to families and children through approximately 1,500 branches and institutions. Almost all of the agencies have well developed adoption services and foster care programs.[1]

My own agency, the Catholic Family Services in the Diocese of Birmingham received its license as a child placing agency from the State of Alabama in 1928. We have, among other things, been placing children in adoption since then. I, myself, have been a practicing social worker for twenty-five years. In the 1950s and the 1960s there were more infants available for adoption than there were willing adoptive parents. However, that picture has changed substantially. Each year for the past five years Catholic Family Services in the Diocese of Birmingham has averaged sixteen completed infant adoptions per year. We were limited by the number of children available for such placement. Yet, at the same time, each year Catholic Family Services has received between 450 and 500 inquiries from people who wish to adopt an infant. Why is there this obvious dearth of infants available for adoption?

There are many variables and I don't purport to know them all. However, I believe a few are worthy of mention.

The first one I would like to address is abortion. If one believes the fetus is a person there is no way one could support abortion. As I have already stated I believe that the fetus is a person and therefore I believe abortion is murder. On the other hand, if one believes the fetus is not a person, and I believe there are people who sincerely believe this, I can understand that a sensitive, caring and concerned person would lean toward supporting abortion—at least on first look. However, as reasonable people let's examine both premises, not from the viewpoint of denying either, but rather from the viewpoint of preferred palatability, from a universal rather than a parochial point of view. Given our answer to this specific inquiry, we can address options available to both groups.

If you support abortion as a solution to unwanted pregnancy, it appears to me that you would have to consider yourself infallible. Abortion has a finality about it that is indisputable, irrevocable, and allows for no error in judgment. Adoption on the other hand offers an alternative. In reality, if the statistics of people in the Diocese of Birmingham wanting to adopt children are reflective of the situation nationwide, and I believe they are, then there is no such thing as an unwanted child. Also, with adoption available as an alternative we are not denying any woman freedom of choice. She is free to choose to be or not to be a parent.

[1] In 1980, these agencies served 51,797 unmarried parents, provided adoption services to 44,597 persons and completed 4,528 adoptions, many of these children with special needs.

I believe another variable to be considered is independent adoptions. The Model State Adoption Act encourages private placement while adding more regulations and stipulations to licensed adoption agencies. Adoption agencies, in accord with good practice, must do careful home studies before placing a child. The Model State Adoption Act does not require that intermediaries in private adoptions meet licensing requirements or follow any minimum standards for adoptive placement or engage in any sound child placing practices. Third party participants may be qualified in their own professions, but not in child welfare.

Counseling services must be offered to both birth parents and the adoptive parents prior to an adoption so that all the parties have the opportunity to work through all of their fears and their anxieties. Each person must feel secure that his or her decision is in the best interest of both the child and him or herself. Intermediaries are not trained in the skills required for effective counseling.

A third variable is the general disdain for the family construct that permeates our society today. There are many factors embodied in this condition such as materialism, the "me first, last and always" attitude, and an overall lack of responsibility and dignity as it relates to sexual behavior. Adults are giving children the idea that sex is all fun and games. We should be giving them the idea that sex is serious and profound and that there are feelings and responsibility accompanying sexual behavior. I would like to quote from an article that was published in the Chicago Sun Times recently. The author of the article is Arlene S. Uslander. Ms. Uslander teaches in an elementary school in the Chicago suburb of Skokie. She states "I am not advocating a return to Victorian days when people were supposed to act as though sex did not exist. I am advocating that TV producers, writers and sponsors recognize and respond to the fact that before 10:00 p.m. more than half of the viewers are children. Sensitive, suggestible children who imitate the actors and actresses they see (and look up to) on television."

"It really is high time the TV industry—and the mass media in general—start cleaning up their acts. If they don't, instead of playing party games like pin the tail on the donkey and musical chairs, kids will be playing pin the tail on Brooke Shields' (tight jeaned) backside and musical beds." I suggest that if it is appropriate to be this harsh on the news and t.v. media, then we should be equally demanding of responsibility on the part of would be professionals who, in my opinion, are recklessly distributing contraceptives and contraceptive information to children.

From my clincial experience with children over the years, and there are studies to support this, there has been increased sexual acting out among our children as there has been increased availability of and supposed education in the use of contraceptive devices.

Finally I would like to made the following recommendations:

Stop so-called legalized abortions and in the interim stop the use of federal money funding abortions.

Stop independent adoptions.

Stop federal funding of the distribution of contraceptives to children.

Concentrate on making certain that all Federal policies and programs support the family and strengthen not weaken the fabric of the American family and concentrate on a national program of advertising the strength and beauty of the family construct.

Members of the Committee I thank you for your attention, I will be happy to respond to your questions.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Mr. Donlevy.

I will start with Mrs. Piester with the questions. Mrs. Piester, you have often called infant adoption "the loving option." Do you believe that the decrease in infant placements has had positive results because it has increased the demand for older, handicapped, and minority children?

Mrs. PIESTER. I believe that the decrease in infant adoption has been due to the fact that services have not been flexible and have not met the needs of young women, and thus many young women have gone the route of abortion or have kept their child because of the pressure of peer groups and programs that have promoted children becoming parents.

I say that based on the fact that in the last 10 years as infant adoptions began to decrease, our program has grown, and we will place 400 infants this year. I hear this from the young women

constantly, about their friends not knowing how to find the services.

Also, it is a fact that the program must be a challenging program that is comprehensive and which starts the minute a young woman comes to you in helping her to plan for her future and her child's future.

Senator DENTON. In view of the success you have had and the expansion you have experienced, why do you think there are so few maternity homes left?

Mrs. PIESTER. I think that when abortion came along and we began to talk about contraceptives, many agencies felt that there would not be a need for services for young women. And I think custodial care will not meet the needs of a young woman today.

So, I think it was a change in programing and a change in meeting the needs of the young women. However, we have a cry from young women all over the country saying, "Why do we not get a service like that in our community? Why do you not have an extension of your service in our community?"

I think we have not explored the real need for comprehensive programs.

Senator DENTON. Thank you. I have other questions which we will submit to you, if you will answer them for the record.

Miss Greathouse, I believe that you answered this question in your testimony. Do you feel that pregnant girls today are receiving adequate counseling about the adoption option? I think you indicated you did not believe they were.

Miss GREATHOUSE. I did not mean to indicate that they are not receiving it. At least in our agency, we have always tried to make it clear what options were available and then work with them on these options.

Whether or not agencies are reaching people who need the services, however, is a question that I have. I do not think we are reaching all the people that we should reach.

Senator DENTON. Does your program receive deferrals from family planning clinics such as Planned Parenthood?

Miss GREATHOUSE. We have, yes.

Senator DENTON. Whereas Mr. Donlevy indicated, as well as Mrs. Piester, that they objected to the provision of contraceptives by Government policy, you probably would not go that far. But would you agree with the premise that if those contraceptives are made available by the Government, the provision of the availability should not be accompanied by peer pressure, so-called sex education literature, and movies which present the idea that premarital adolescent sexual activity is quite normal and acceptable and, in some of the movies, even desirable?

Miss GREATHOUSE. I think there probably is some difference of opinion on how effective some of these movies are and what the focus is. I do agree that there should not be peer pressure to make this an acceptable way of life. I think we have to be realistic about some of the things that are available to young people, and not completely close out some ways of dealing with the problem that we may not entirely like personally.

Senator DENTON. I now have 7½ minutes to get over to vote. I will ask Mr. Donlevy a couple of questions, and I will have to set a record getting over there, and call for a 15-minute recess.

Are the services provided to girls at your agency confidential, Mr. Donlevy?

Mr. DONLEVY. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator DENTON. What do you think impedes young girls today from making an adoption decision?

Mr. DONLEVY. The things I have already alluded to. I think the biggest problem we have is the seeming acceptance by society of what they believe to be an inevitable acting out of our adolescents and children, and I disagree with that position.

Senator DENTON. Well, I will say for the record that the so-called sexual revolution or the new morality is not at all new; it is as old as Sodom and Gomorrah or any other society which tried that morality as new and then, in every case, lost its viability and cohesiveness as a society. So, I find it unfortunate that we are talking about a generation gap and saying, "Let us return to the 1950's or the 1940's or the 1930's." We are talking about 5,000 years of civilization and the inevitable lesson that one cannot regard the new morality as something new without being stupid or ignorant, because the consequences in the past, as presented by such amoral anthropologists as H.G. Wells and others, fly in the face of that. That is a personal opinion, but I believe the beginning of wisdom on the subject.

Where do the girls who come to your agency find out about your services, Mr. Donlevy?

Mr. DONLEVY. Most of our referrals are from ministers and priests, who are approached usually either by the girl directly or the parents of the girl. And we have had some second referrals by the girls themselves.

Senator DENTON. Thank you. We will keep the record open for anything you would care to submit for 2 weeks.

We will recess for 20 minutes; we will meet again at 20 minutes to 1.

[Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.]

Senator DENTON. The hearing will come to order.

Our final panel of witnesses is here today to discuss Senate bill 989, which was authored by the distinguished Senator from Michigan, Mr. Carl Levin. Senator Levin is as busy as any of us—busier than most—and his care and work in this area go back a number of Congresses. We are very fortunate to be able to have him here this morning.

I would like to welcome you, Senator Levin. If at any time you must leave us, please do not hesitate to do so without any apology. I am happy to see that you are accompanied by an expert counsel. Would you care to introduce the counsel?

STATEMENT OF HON. CARL LEVIN, A U.S SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN, ACCOMPANIED BY JAQUELINE PARKER AND JOSEPH HARRINGTON; CAROL CRAMER, NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON AND GUARDIAN TRUSTEE, INTERNATIONAL SOUNDEX REUNION REGISTRY; SUZANNE C. RICHARDSON, PRESIDENT, MASSACHUSETTS ADOPTIVE FAMILY ASSOCIATION; AND WILLIAM PIERCE, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ADOPTION, A PANEL

Senator LEVIN. Well, first, I will introduce my staff member, Jackie Parker, who is on my right. Later on after my brief testimony, Carol Cramer, who is the guardian trustee and national spokesperson for the International Soundex Reunion Registry, will speak.

On my left is Mr. Joseph Harrington, who is a leading authority on State registry involvement, and an author of a report dealing with this issue published in the 1981 spring edition of the journal of the American Public Welfare Association. He heads the legislative committee of the American Adoption Congress, which is a leading organization, Mr. Chairman, of adoptive parents, adoptees and birth parents.

Mr. Chairman, first of all, let me thank you for setting aside this time to have a hearing and to hear from this panel on Senate bill 989, which has been cosponsored by Senators Cranston, Randolph, and Moynihan.

First of all, I want to commend you personally for the leadership that you have taken in this area. Your sensitivity and your commitment to adoption, to the needs of people to adopt, and to encouraging adoption in this society and in this country is absolutely pivotal for there to be progress in this area, and your commitment and interest in this area, I think, augers well for us to make progress in this Congress in the area of adoption. I just could not proceed without commending you for the sensitivity and commitment that you have shown.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Senator Levin.

Senator LEVIN. Mr. Chairman, the fact of the matter is that millions of people—adoptees and natural birth paren's—are looking for each other. That process is not going to stop; that process will continue. There are interests in all of the parties involved in that search; the birth parents, the adopted children, and, of course, the adoptive parents have interests.

Those interests must be sensitively met and must be sensitively balanced, and this bill is an effort to achieve a balance and to help resolve the issues that are raised by those continuing searches.

This bill, first of all, and most critically, is voluntary. It provides for a national voluntary clearinghouse for people who are looking for each other, and I emphasize that. These are people who are looking for each other. There would not be a match, of course, where just one party is looking for the other; there could only be a match where both parties are looking for each other.

It is a national clearinghouse because the experience is that State registries and other registries, while important and play an important role, cannot do the job which is going to have to be done if there is going to be a constructive solution to the millions of searches that are going on.

This bill also provides that there will be no access to closed files; this is not a bill which opens files. This is a bill which is based on a voluntary effort of people to find each other. Again, there is simply no match made unless both parties do put their names into the national clearinghouse.

It is a bill which does not reflect poorly in the slightest on adoptive parents; quite the opposite. These searches historically have been made by people who are deeply in love with their adoptive parents and who are searching for their birth parents for other reasons than a lack of affection or lack of love. The witnesses will go into that after I am done—Ms. Cramer, in particular.

The search is limited on the adopted party to people who are 21 and older, and that is a change from last year when it was 18 years or older.

I am going to make my statement brief. I want to read a portion of one interview that we had. I am going to put my statement in the record, and I then want to turn this matter over to Ms. Cramer and Mr. Harrington, who will be here—he is an expert—for any questions that you may have. He personally supports the bill, and his testimony on behalf of his organization will be forthcoming at a later date.

The interview was one of hundreds of interviews which my staff, led by Jackie Parker, made with the parties that are involved in this process. This is an interview with a young woman who had been adopted, and she said, "Had I surrendered a child for adoption, I know I would always secretly wonder what had happened to her, if she were alive, if she were well, if she had found a good home. I would wonder what she looked like, what sort of person she had become. I would wonder if she wondered about me.

"If only I could speak to the woman who gave me life, I could tell her how happy I am. I could tell her about the wonderful people who adopted me"—and that is so critical—"and the joy she brought into their lives. And for my part, I could see her, discover the secret of my origin, know the country from which my ancestors come—the story that is my history.

"I would see a blood relative. Until my daughter was born, I could never discern my features in the face of another. Again and again since my son's birth, people have asked me, 'who does he look like?' I want to know the answer. For 7 years, I have been searching. Under the present laws, the search is difficult, frustrating and time consuming. It is often expensive as well."

Mr. Chairman, in the absence of a constructive approach, such as I believe is reflected in this bill, I believe the pressures for search can lead to less constructive solutions—solutions which will be a lot less constructive for the adoption process that you are so totally committed to.

I believe that with your leadership, this Congress and this Senate can do much to stimulate this. Mr. Chairman, I now will take leave. I appreciate very much your comments at the opening. I commend to you the testimony of Ms. Cramer and, of course, Mr. Harrington is here as a resource person for any questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of Senator Levin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN

Mr. Chairman, the issue of a reunion between an adoptee and his or her birth parent(s) is sensitive and touches the hearts of all parties involved. This action must be dealt with care, thoughtfulness, and compassion. Under present conditions, a unilateral search by either the adopted offspring or the birth parent can lead to sudden meetings for which the other parties involved are unprepared.

For some time now I have been touched by the problems of adopted persons who seek, for a number of valid reasons, to learn more about their own history and, in some cases, attempt to make contact with their birth parent(s) or other relatives. The need of these citizens to have access to information which may affect their own health and influence their own family decisions, is clear. But at the same time, I also recognize the feeling of birth parents who choose not to communicate with offspring they relinquished in past life. This delicate balance is one that can be maintained. I believe that S. 989 deals with these emotions in a careful and sensitive way. The legislation is designed to avoid intrusion into the life of either party or violation of constitutional privacy rights. The bill does not provide for the unsealing of records. I repeat the bill has nothing to do with the unsealing of records. Additionally, there would be no infringement of States' rights—State participation is not necessary, due to the voluntary nature of the program. No access to state information would be required. The bill provides for the establishment of an independent non-profit clearinghouse under Federal supervision that would ensure complete confidentiality. The proposal provides for statutory language making it unlawful for information contained in the clearinghouse to be disclosed for unintended purposes. Under the proposal, no action could be taken by the clearinghouse unless and until both the adult adoptee and his or her birthparent(s), siblings or other relatives have independently made contact with the center. In other words, communication between interested parties takes place only when there is independent contact with the clearinghouse. A biological parent or adoptee over the age of 21 may initiate the locating process by submitting an application to the national clearinghouse. An adult sibling or other biological relative of an adoptee may initiate the locating process when: The biological parent of an adoptee is deceased or his or her whereabouts are unknown; or the biological parent of an adoptee has consented in writing to the initiation of the locating process.

The bill further provides for "reasonable fees" to be paid by the applicant. The program would be established as a three year pilot or demonstration program. The anticipated cost of this program is minimal—expected not to exceed $800,000 during first year implementation—and future costs are expected to be far less.

Mr. Chairman, last year, over a period of 9 months, my staff conducted extensive research, surveying search groups, interviewing individuals of the medical and legal professions, reviewing case studies, and personally screening dozens of adoptive parents and individuals who are searching for, or have located relatives.

The various studies reviewed during this research revealed some startling and significant facts. A preliminary Los Angeles study determined that 82 percent of the birthparents they surveyed wanted reunion with their adopted children when grown, if the offspring so desired. Fifty percent of the birthparents continued to experience feelings of loss, pain, and mourning over the child they had relinquished. A Queens College study revealed that adult adoptees searching for their birthparents are not motivated by "dissatisfaction and disaffection with his or her adoptive family relationship"—the reasons they gave for seeking their parents ranged from the need for more medical information to a desire to establish one's identity.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to share the sentiments expressed by Lorraine Dusky, a young woman who relinquished her daughter at birth 15 years ago. The young woman's remarks are from an article which appeared in the October 15, 1979 Newsweek magazine. Ms. Dusky is the author of "Birthmark" and is a member of the Adoptees' Liberty Movement Association. I quote:

"Somewhere out there is a 13 year-old daughter of mine. Actually, she's another woman's daughter, too: I gave her up for adoption at birth. I must assume—and I underscore the word must for it is the only way I can live with some sort of equanimity—that she has a mother and a father who love her and give her all the things that daughters need * * *. Now, many people imagine that what happens to the woman who gave away a child is that she has a rather gloomy existence, ashamed and alone in her hometown, where there's often a whisper after she leaves the room. Or she is well-adjusted and living in suburbia with 1.4 children and a husband who pitches in around the house. Or she left town and went to some big city like New York or L.A. or Chicago and drowned her sorrows in a career. In any event, she has gone on to make a new life and most probably doesn't think too often of her child, and most likely doesn't want to be reminded of that painful time in her life by a stranger come knocking on her door. Well, it doesn't work out that way.

Yes, we do make new lives for ourselves, we work for the telephone company and we win beauty pageants. We write for magazines like this and we produce television shows. We teach school and we run for public office. We get married or we don't. We are ne'er-do-wells and we are the pillars of the community. There are approximately 5 million of us, and we are your neighbors. But we do not forget. And whatever we do with our lives, yesterday's children live in our hearts.

I worry that the birth-control pills mistakenly prescribed for me during the first four months of pregnancy are somehow harmful to my child today. The American Cancer Society agrees.

* * * Why did I do it? It's a familiar story. At 23, I was unmarried and terrified. I didn't see how I could give my child a good life. Adoption seemed like the best solution for both of us. I can hear some of you thinking—it's been said to my face and behind my back—I made my bed and now I must lie in it. Play with fire and you get burned. OK. You have a point there; I won't argue. But what do you say to my daughter if, when she's grown up—say 18 or so—she wants to find out who her natural parents are, what her story is, if she has brothers and sisters and grandparents other than the ones she grew up knowing?

Why can't my grown-up daughter decide for herself? Having spoken to a great many natural mothers over the last eight years, I believe that the desire to find out what happens to our children is universal, or nearly so. The available data bear this out. The bond of birth is in our genes. The decision I made was a painful one but I made it. If my daughter wants to know why, I owe her an explanation.

* * * It seems that the psychological connection to one's roots is critical. That there is something missing from my life is beside the point. I was told I loved my daughter enough to give her up to two parents with an income better than my own; in fact, in 1966—when the world seemed quite a different place—I was practically congratulated for my generosity. I cannot change the past, I did what I did. But I imagine my grown-up daughter having questions without answers one day. The least I can do is give her the right to decide whether she wants to know me.

Mr. Chairman, S. 989 does not contain a sweeping new idea. It is similar to the reunion and matching files that presently exist within various adoptee groups. But, a national clearinghouse under Federal supervision would on a far more comprehensive basis inform, coordinate, and expedite the reuions of those persons who wish to be reunited. More importantly, it will ensure the necessary confidentiality of the clearinghouse, and lessen the time, money and frustration presently incurred by all persons desiring to find each other.

Jean Payton, who has been called the mother of the adoptee movement and is the founder of Orphan Voyage, the first adoptee organization, has written the following:

"The various reunion or matching files of adoptee groups at ALMA, Orphan Voyage and International Soundex, the numerous small files are little match for the problem, presented to a population within adoption which number close to two-and-a-half million people. We need to assist people who have a mutual desire to meet after the separation by adoption by a computerized identification center of a national scope supported and carried on in such a way that it can be a permanent starting point for people who would otherwise have to flounder or fail.

Mr. Chairman, my proposal could have alleviated the pain and suffering experienced by a young man and his birthmother, referred to in the following quote from a letter written to me by a young woman who has been searching for her birthmother for 8 years.

I quote:

"I worked for two years with a young man searching for his biological parents and when he finally found them, learned that his birthmother and he had both gone to the same adoption agency for information within months of each other and were denied help. Each was assured that the other would not want to know and would suffer from knowledge or contact. We cannot but question why this myth is being perpetuated in the face of direct refutation, personally in this case or more broadly in the face of sociological studies of hundreds of involved parties."

This young woman, whom my staff personally interviewed, went on to say:

"Had I surrendered a child for adoption, I know I would always secretly wonder what had happened to her, if she were alive, if she were well, if she had found a good home. I would wonder what she looked like, what sort of a person she had become. I would wonder if she wondered about me. Sociological research done over the last ten years indicates that my projections were not unfounded. The overwhelming majority of women who give up children for adoption are disturbed by these questions all their lives. Many are even haunted by guilt. This is a chapter in their lives that never has an ending. They can never put their thoughts to rest. If only I could speak to the woman who gave me life I could tell her how happy I am; I could tell her about the wonderful people who adopted me and the joy she brought

into their lives. And for my part, I could see her, discover the secret of my orgin, know the country from which my ancestors came, the story that is my history. I could re-enter the bond of life that links all other people. I would see a blood relative—until my daughter was born, I could never discern my features in the face of another, and again and again since my son's birth people have asked me, 'who does he look like?' I want to know the answer. For seven years I have been searching. Under our present laws, the search is difficult, frustrating and time consuming. It is often expensive, as well."

Mr. Chairman, if either the birthparent or adoptee does not seek to know the identity of the other—so be it. But if both want reunion, why not facilitate it. In an age of rootlessness, the search for knowledge of one's own identity, if it harms nobody, certainly should not be squelched now by the simple absence of a clearinghouse.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Senator Levin.

I would ask now that Mrs. Suzanne Richardson, an adoptive parent and the head of the Massachusetts Adoptive Family Association, and Mr. William Pierce, president of the National Committee for Adoption, be seated here at the table.

Ms. Cramer, I am going to ask you for your opening statement. In view of the fact that this room is scheduled for another meeting at 1, if you could summarize, if possible, I will have to submit my questions for the record.

With that, Ms. Cramer.

Ms. CRAMER. All right. Thank you very much for letting us be here this afternoon, Senator. I am very grateful to be able to represent 5 million adoptees.

My personal interest in the bill stems from a wonderful personal experience of meeting my birth mother some 2 years ago. I have a great belief in the individual's right, in cases of mutual interest, to find out the identity of a birth parent or an adoptee or a sibling.

As an adoptee, I felt the strong desire to establish my own sense of identity, and one of the reasons was that I am an identical twin and I do not know if my sister is dead or alive. So, this desire to find me and my own identity had nothing to do with my feelings toward my adopted parents. I came from an extremely loving home, but I had questions about myself.

I am also representing Mrs. Emma Mae Vilardi, who founded and is still the head of the International Soundex Reunion Registry of Carson City, Nev. This organization provides a confidential registry that unites people who voluntarily desire to find each other. At present there are a total of 10,000 active entries in the Soundex Registry, and 1 our of every 2 persons is a birth parent. At Soundex' inception this ratio was 30 to 1. Clearly, the increased number of birth parents wishing to find their natural children has demonstrated the growing awareness and understanding of the adoption process. In 1980 alone, Soundex was notified of 1,500 reunions. The vast majority of these reunions were positive experiences for the birth parent and the adoptee—98 percent.

Soundex founder, Emma Mae Vilardi, estimates that if a national registry were established as proposed by S. 989 more than 2 million adopted persons and their birth parents or siblings, would utilize the system. Mrs. Vilardi would give the custody of Soundex to the U.S. Government when such a national system is established by this bill, after the 3-year pilot period.

The necessity of a unified, structured, national registry system is evident. This registry will be successful in lessening the time, money and frustration presently incurred by both adoptees and

birth parents desiring to find each other. Currently this process takes on the average of 3 years. This registry must be established at the national level because such a system does not exist at the State tier. Only four States have established a registry system and there is no indication that the number of States will increase in the next few years. The lack of a national uniform registry precludes a successful search on the part of both the adoptee and birth parent or sibling. For example, adoptions are often started in one State, but finalized in another. In addition, the adoptee, birth parent, or sibling may be a resident of several different States during their respective lifetimes. Past examples of States' insensitivity to the rights of participants in the adoption process indicate that the possibility of State initiated registries are virtually nil.

I must stress again that the bill provides only for cases where mutual consent is expressed. Since the age is of an adult, not a child—but as an adult, at 21, when he or she enters the registry, this should prove once and for all that it has nothing to do with children, but rather adults who are standing on their own feet.

There is one thing I want to say; that is, as an adoptee, I understand the terror and the frustration and the resentment of adopted parents who feel that such a discovery will take their son or daughter away from them. We adoptees absolutely empathize with our parents' position. However, sir, most of our adopted parents know who their mothers, fathers or grandparents are, and they know whose face they possess. Sir, they know where they came from.

So, of course, it is very difficult for them to be able to relate to the need of an adult son or daughter who wants to learn of his or her own genetic heritage or roots, and they feel enormously threatened because of it.

The search of birth parents, believe me, has nothing whatsoever to do with looking for a mother or a father. Our adopted parents are our parents. We all feel this way, but we need to find our own identities. And the last thing we want to do is hurt anyone, birth or adopted parents, but we are in the dark about ourselves all of our lives. You just cannot imagine how it feels, not to know who you are when you look in a mirror.

You may be sure that our adopted parents have nothing to fear from us; we love them and we thank them and we need them. So, I want to make that very plain.

In 7 years of operating Soundex, Mrs. Vilardi has never encountered a birth father who protested when a birth mother registered with the registry. Now, it has come up about people opposing the registry system nationally because they feel it would result in an invasion of privacy of the biological parents' privacy.

They suggest that other people should be given the right to deny this reunion of the other two parties. But it is kind of a catch-22 because the mother would have to first—say it is the mother we are speaking of—find the father; she would not know where he is, perhaps. In some cases, she might not even know who the man is, and therefore there would have to be a search and money would have to be expended, and it would defeat the purpose of the entire system.

Again, we are speaking of adults—two people who just want to find each other. Mrs. Vilardi has never encountered such a protest in all of her years of having her own system. In fact, in some cases just lately, a birth father has requested that the birth mother's name not be given.

In my own letter to my mother, which I will submit as part of my testimony, which I will not read, I have written, "I have wanted to find the answers, and you, all my life, and in doing so, I find myself." That is what it is all about—finding myself.

So, we respectfully ask that the subcommittee allow mutually-interested parties to have such an opportunity by approving S. 989, and I hope that the subcommittee will examine my testimony closely because I feel it answers every single objection to our bill offered by other witnesses testifying today.

Thank you very much for your time, sir.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Ms. Cramer. That was touching and, obviously, very sincere.

Ms. CRAMER. Oh, yes.

[The prepared statements of Ms. Cramer and Mrs. Vilardi follow:]

TESTIMONY OF CAROL CRAMER, ON BEHALF OF EMMA M. VILARDI, FOUNDER AND REGISTRAR OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOUNDEX REUNION REGISTRY

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. My name is Carol Cramer and I am the National Spokesperson and Guardian Trustee of the International Soundex Reunion Registry. I would like to thank the members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to present my organization's views on the subject of a National Adoption Clearinghouse as proposed by S. 989, the Adoption Identification Act of 1981, sponsored by Sen. Carl Levin and cosponsors Cranston, Randolph and Moynihan.

My personal interest in this bill stems not only from my positive experience and new found relationship with my birth parent (who I met for the first time two years ago), but my belief in an individual's right to know in cases of mutual interest the identity of a birth parent, adoptee, or sibling. As an adoptee, I felt the desire to establish my own sense of identity. This desire had nothing to do with my feelings toward my adoptive parents. I was brought up in a very loving home and was given all the advantages a child could receive. Finding my birth parent, however, allowed me to answer questions I had been asking all my life such as: What were the circumstances of my adoption? What nationality, race, religion, and social background do I come from, and even more importantly what kind of medical problems could I inherit? I have encountered several birth parents who also seek answers to a multitude of unanswered questions.

I would like to submit both Mrs. Vilardi's and my own statement for the record. I will summarize, if I may several important concepts included in these statements that clearly indicate our wholehearted support for a national registry system.

International Soundex was founded by Emma Vilardi of Carson City, Nevada seven years ago. This organization provides a confidential registry that unites people who voluntarily desire to find each other. At present, there are 12,000 entries in the Soundex registry and one out of every two persons is a birth parent At Soundex's inception this ratio was 30 to 1. Clearly, the increased numbers of birth parents wishing to find their natural children has demonstrated a growing awareness and understanding of the adoption process. In 1980 alone, Soundex's efforts resulted in 1500 reunions. The vast majority of these reunions were positive experiences for both the birth parent and the adoptee—98 percent.

Currently, a lack of funds and manpower have precluded any expansion of Soundex's services to all who would desire to utilize the system. Soundex's founder Emma Vilardi, estimates that if a national registry was established as is proposed by S. 989, more than two million adopted persons and their birth parents or siblings would utilize the system. Mrs. Vilardi would dissolve Soundex when such a national system is established by this bill.

The necessity of a unified, structured national registry system in evident. This registry will be successful in lessening the time, money and frustration presently incurred by both adoptees and birth parents desiring to find each other. Currently, this process takes on the average three years. This registry must be established at

the national level because such a system does not exist at the state tier. Only five states have established a registry system and there is no indication that the number of states will increase in the next few years. The lack of a national uniform registry precludes a successful search on the part of both the adoptee and birth parent or sibling. For example, adoptions are often started in one state but finalized in another. In addition, the adoptee, birth parent, or sibling may be a resident of several different states during their respective lifetimes. Past examples of state insensitivity to the rights of participants in the adoption process indicate that the possibility of state initiated registry systems are virtually nil.

We certainly respect the right of the birth parent not to want to meet the adoptee. We are simply requesting that when a birth parent does wish to meet their natural child and vice versa they be given this opportunity. The Act of Decree of Adoption deliberately makes the equity and equality of the rights of the adoptee, versus the right to privacy of the birth and adoptive parents, interdependent and thus endangering the freedoms of each. We are asking that both the adoptee and the birth parent be allowed the freedom to fulfill independent desires and escape the present constrictions resulting from interdependency.

For the preceding and following reasons, we feel that the provisions of S. 989 would best meet the needs of millions of adopted children and parents who have the desire to find each other. This bill calls for the establishment of an independent non-profit clearinghouse under Federal supervision that would insure complete confidentiality, equality ans sensitivity. The operation of this clearinghouse is independent of any government department. This proposal, in addition, is very inexpensive in light of the benefits that would accrue to millons of individuals involved in the adoption process. It is certain to become self-sufficient by the second or third year of operation.

Because this national registry can only be useful when both parties register, it precludes undesired disclosures of information. I must stress again that this bill provides only for cases where mutual consent is expressed. Many have argued that an adoptive parent should have a right to intervene in this process. We, however, disagree with this contention because under this bill an adopted child is no longer a child but an adult (age 21) when he or she enters the registry. This process therefore has nothing to do with the adoptive parent. A quote from an adoptee to adoptive parents will help to clarify this point, "I'm not searching for a better life or more happiness. I've been given all of those things, and more, from you. I'm not searching for my 'mother' or my 'father.' I know where to find those very special people. Who I'm really searching for is me."

In my own letter to my mother which I'd like to submit I have written, "I have wanted to find the answers—and you—all my life, and in doing so, I find myself." We ask that the Subcommittee allow mutually interested parties to have such an opportunity by approving S. 989. I thank you for your time.

Final Letter Dated January 6, 1979 but Mailed January 8, 1979:

DEAR MRS. SMITH: This is the most difficult letter I have ever composed in my life. But I could not continue with my own life the way it has been, and I feel in my innermost being that the time has come to seek answers to questions that I have been uncomfortably living with all my life.

I want you to know that I feel you would be proud of me. I think I have continued to evolve into the kind of person you would like and approve of. Someone has given me great quality and sensitivity.

But it is natural that a big piece of me is missing, and I remain partly a puzzle of myself. I so need to know some answers to questions like what is my nationality; what time was I born; what happened to my twin sister (who I also continue to miss); who do I resemble physically; who gave me an I.Q. of 150, and several major talents; what am I heir to, health-wise. . .

You can well imagine the list is long. I have waited to find the answers—and you—all my life, and in doing so, I find myself.

Regardless of your decision, I want to thank you again for your unselfishness and the gift of life you bestowed upon me. I send my love to you across time and space, mother.

I know you understand.

Your Daughter,

JUDITH ANN.

SUPPLEMENT TO TESTIMONY OF CAROL CRAMER

I understand the terror, frustration and resentment of adopted parents who fear that such a discovery will take their son or daughter away from them. We adoptees empathize with our parents' position. However, our adopted parents know who their mother, father and grandparents are; they know whose face they possess; they know

where they came from. So of course it is terribly difficult for them to relate to the need of their adult son or daughter who wants to learn his or her own genetic heritage and roots. This search for birthparents has absolutely nothing to do with looking for a mother or father. Our adopted parents are our parents. All of us feel this way. But we need to know who we are, what we are heir to, in so many different ways. We need to find our own identities. The last thing we wish to do is hurt anyone else. But we are in the dark about ourselves all of our lives. Can you possibly imagine how this feels, this not knowing?

You may be sure that our adopted parents have nothing to fear from us. We love them.

Many have opposed a national registry system because they feel it could result in the invasion of the biological father's privacy. This argument does not eliminate the adoptee's or the birthmother's right to meet each other. In seven years of operating Soundex, Emma Vilardi has never encountered a birthfather who protested when a birthmother registered with the Registry. In fact, in the last two years, an increasing number of birthfathers have entered the Registry on their own, and in some recent cases the birthfather has requested that the birthmother's name not be identified. Finally, we must point out that in the majority of cases the biological father doesn't even know he has a son or daughter.

TESTIMONY OF MRS. ROSCOE DRUMMOND, NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON AND GUARDIAN TRUSTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOUNDEX REUNION REGISTRY, ON BEHALF OF EMMA MAY VILARDI, FOUNDER AND REGISTRAR OF THE ISSR

Since mankind's first appearance on earth the central question has been, "Who am I?" This question has a special meaning for those persons who have been adopted, and the adoptive community as a whole.

In tenant: Our nation governed by the principles of democracy, holds to the basic principle that one's individual identity at birth is a vested inheritance, with immediate fixed rights to present and future enjoyment, held in tenure as a citizen of the United States of America, and subject to no condition or contingency. As such, it is the first individual property and personal freedom we possess at birth, and the only property we carry into the grave!

In principle: The Adoption Decree, or Act of Adoption, is the termination of the rights and duties between the child and its birth parents, by the legal substitution of an equivalent status between the child and its adoptive parents.

In original concept: In the best interest and welfare of the child, the implementation of individual state adoption statutes pertaining to the sealing of records were by intent secretive, "purportedly to protect the adoptee only during his or her formative and minority years."

In truth: The effect of adoption imposes personal infringements and enforces forfeiture of the pri[illegible]s of identity of self, and next-of-kin, upon the adoptee for the rest of his or he[illegible]e. The adoptee under statute can be denied access to all or part of his or her social-biological-medical history and heritage pertaining to self and family of birth, even if the denial places the life of the adoptee, or his or her issue, in jeopardy.

Privacy: In view of the present stand on individual privacy, the Act of Degree of Adoption, "deliberately makes the equity and equality of the rights of the adoptee, versus the right to privacy of the birth and adoptive parents, interdependent," thus endangering the freedoms of each.

Special interests: At this writing one special interest group has admittedly expended over one hundred thousand dollars to lobby for the enactment of additional amendments to existing adoption statutes in individual states. Their goal? "To made the release of any information pertaining to adoption, including non-identifying social-biological-medical history, without a Court Order, a Misdemeanor!"

Court orders: Seldom are Court Orders issued in the majority of states due to possible ramifications pertaining to "Rights of Privacy." When issued, many public and private custodians of the sealed records have refused to honor specific court orders. The word "custodians" refers to Clerks of the Court issuing the order, placing agencies, hospitals, Registrars of Vital Statistics, and others.

Due process of law: This means no due process of law is available to the citizen person of judicial rebirth commonly called the adoptee. Indeed his or her property, "name and identity at birth, heritage and legacy," is forfeit! One's very being can be, and is, appropriated for public welfare and private use. He or She remains a child of the people, a second class citizen of legal minority.

Federal system: Our States and National governments are structured deliberately to checkmate and respect the powers of each other in order to protect and insure in

life and under law, that all people are entitled to possess and enjoy equal rights. This includes the dignity of choice and control of his or her own destiny.

Selective discrimination: When "States Rights" strip or debar any citizen of this nation of his or her basic rights and liberty, and/or permits by statute the denial or exemption of certain inalienable rights by which one man, or men, under any guise, "individual right of privacy," claims and exercises in total exclusion of the right of any other individual; then, Federal Law should and must intervene if we are to survive as a nation!

Therefore: The International Soundex Reunion Registry, its Founder, Trustees, Regional Representatives, Participating Triad Organizations, Special Services, and Thousands of Registrants, strongly urge the enactment of bill S. 989, providing for a "Voluntary adoption identification demonstration program." As cited under title III, of the Adoption Identification Act of 1981.

Senator DENTON. And I compliment Senator Levin for being interested in such an area.

Mrs. Richardson is next.

Mrs. RICHARDSON. I am an adult adoptee and adoptive parent with biological and adopted children.

Adoption has been a very positive experience in my life. I am currently the president of Family a voluntary organization existing statewide in Massachusetts, with a sister branch in Illinois. Family consists of adoptive parents, adoptees, and other persons from various fields who are interested in preserving the role of adoption in our society.

Our organization strongly opposes Senate bill 989 for the reasons now discussed.

At the core of adoption are the beliefs that it is private and permanent. Adoptive parents have made a lifelong, bonding commitment to their children. I sincerely feel in my heart that it would not have been possible for by wonderful parents to have made that kind of commitment that they made to me if there had been a registry hanging over our heads.

No one enters into the adoption process with the idea that some day, the child or children that they take to be their own will be exposed to extraneous, disturbing contacts which would tend to disrupt the family unit. The existing laws of the individual states have universally recognized and zealously protected them.

By insuring that adoption records will remain privileged, the States have sought to guarantee, as a matter of fundamental policy, the values and interests of the family.

Family respectfully submits that it would be a grave error of judgment for this committee to recommend creation of a national registry for adoption identification. The existence of such a registry might cause many individuals who are contemplating adoption to abandon the idea out of fear that some day, someone will come across their names in a computer and use the information to shatter a relationship built after years of love and affection.

To the extent that adoptive homes might become unavailable, adoption as an important social device will suffer. The right to be free in intimate personal life choices should remain a concept vigorously protected by the law. I agree with Mr. Master. The idea of computer stored information of a sort described in this bill is opposed to this fundamental right and the right of people to make their own life choices.

The proponents of the legislation may point to the fact that participation in the registration system is voluntary and that no

one can be forced to reveal his or her identity unless they choose to do so.

While this aspect of the bill is praiseworthy, it does not alleviate the legislation's basic flaw—a start toward unsealing records which are considered privileged, and a step toward Federal involvement in questions which have traditionally been reserved for State consideration.

People are not like automobiles to be stereotyped and catalogued, nor should they be specially marked just because they are adopted. I never was. Those who find it necessary to petition the courts for pertinent information have that avenue open to them.

Mr. Chairman, an article has just come out in a recent leading women's magazine, Family Circle, which just came out this week. I would like to present it to you and have you put it on record because it clearly defines the way I feel as an adult adoptee. The title is, "I Wish My Father Had Never Found Me." I think it is important.

We believe that our view on the legislation is shared by the overwhelming majority of adoptive parents in this country and by numerous regligious, social and political groups. In recommending rejection of this bill, we are urging the preservation of the adoptive family from outside forces which seek to erode its foundation. We would hope that you stand on record with us in this goal.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Richardson and the article referred to follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SUZANNE C. RICHARDSON, PRESIDENT, MASSACHUSETTS ADOPTIVE FAMILY ASSOCIATION

My name is Suzanne C. Richardson. I am an adult adoptee and an adoptive parent with biological and adopted children. Adoption has been a positive experience in my life. I am currently the President of Family, a voluntary organization existing statewide in Massachusetts, with a sister branch of Family in Illinois. Family consists of adoptive parents, adoptees, and other persons from various fields who are interested in preserving the role of adoption in our society. Our organization strongly opposes the S. 989 for the reasons now discussed.

There is no question that adoption has long held a valued place in our society. The adoption of children brings together parents who desire to share their love and home, and children who, except for the existence of adoption, would be left to be reared in foster homes or in institutions with no permanency. The result is a union conceived in love and sanctioned in law which contributes to the well-being of society by creating a close knit family with ties every bit as strong as the ties that exist between biological parents and their siblings.

At the core of adoption are the beliefs that it is private and permanent. Adoptive parents have made a life-long, bonding commitment to their children. I sincerely feel, in my heart, that it would not have been possible for my wonderful parents to have made the kind of commitment that they made to me if there had been a registry hanging over our heads.

No one enters into the adoption process with the edea that some day the child or children that they take to be their own will be exposed to extraneous disturbing contacts which would tend to disrupt the family unit. The existing laws of the individual states have universally recognized these principles and zealously protected them. By insuring that adoption records will remain privileged, the states have sought to guarantee, as a matter of fundamental policy, the values and interests of the family. Time and time again, in the past decade, Massachusetts and other leading industrial states, have rejected any efforts aimed directly or indirectly at penetrating the adoptive family unit by disclosing the identity of the adoptee or the adopting parents.

Family respectfully submits that it would be a grave error of judgment for this committee to recommend creation of a national registry for adoption identification. The existence of such registry might cause many individuals who are contemplating

adoption to to abandon the idea out of fear that someday someone will come across their names in a computer and use the information to shatter a relationship built after years of love and affection. To the extent that adoptive homes might become unavailable, adoption as an important social device will suffer. The right to be free in intimate personal life choices should remain a concept vigorously protected by the law. The idea of computer stored information of a sort described in this bill is opposed to this fundamental right and the right of people to make their own life choices.

We also can see no pressing need for any federal action on a matter of such grave sensitivity. The Legislatures of the states have given conscientious attention to the interest of all parties involved in the adoption process. Indeed, most of them have been especially discreet in dealing with bills designed to open adoption records and they have shown a commendable reluctance to make any change in practices and principles that have shown long standing social utility. We think it would be unwise for the federal government to intrude on an area that is so socially sensitive by taking the first step towards unsealing records. We think it is particularly unwise for such benign federalism to override the rights of states which have exhibited serious concerns about the negative effects of such an effort.

The proponents of the legislation may point to the fact that participation in the registration system is voluntary and that no one can be forced to reveal his or her identity unless they choose to do so. While this aspect of the bill is praise-worthy, it does not alleviate the legislation's basic flaw—a start toward unsealing records which are considered privileged and a step toward federal involvement in questions which have traditionally been reserved for state consideration. People are not like automobiles to be stereotyped and catalogued, nor should they be specially marked just because they are adopted. I never was. Those who find it necessary to petition the courts for pertinent information have that avenue open to them.

We believe that our view on the legislation is shared by the overwhelming majority of adoptive parents in this country and by numerous religious, social and political groups. In recommending rejection of this bill, we are urging the preservation of the adoptive family from outside forces which seek to erode its foundation. We would hope that you stand on record with us in this goal.

Thank you.

I Wish My Father Had Never Found Me

(By Bonnie and Charles Remsberg)

Throughout the country the adoptee rights movement is gaining strength. Grown adopted children press for access to information that can lead them to their natural parents. Mothers and fathers search for babies they gave up long ago.

Almost every week highly emotional stories appear in the media showing tearful, exhausted-but-ecstatic reunions. But in real life, not all searches have happy endings.

This is the true story of a young wife and mother who feels that she has been a victim of such a search. It shows, more clearly than fiction, the side of the story we seldom hear—the misery, upheaval and emotional disintegration that unwanted reunions can cause. It is told here because Betsy Turner (which, of course, is not her real name) wants to warn other people that there are some things that are better left alone, some doors that should never be opened—and certainly not the way they were opened for her, with neither her knowledge nor consent.

It started innocently enough. One sunny spring morning in a small Midwestern city, Betsy Turner answered her doorbell to find a pleasant, middle-aged man who said he was a researcher for a public-opinion firm. He wanted to ask her a few questions. Flattered, she let him in and invited him to sit down.

But what the man really wanted was not so much to ask questions as to answer them—and those questions had nothing to do with public opinions. They concerned highly personal matters that Betsy thought no one in the world had a right to pry into. The result of that morning's conversation was that Besty went into an emotional tailspin that very nearly cost here marriage, and threatened her sanity.

For the man who elbowed his way into her life that morning was her father—a man she had never known and had no wish to know. Before their encounter was over, Betsy had learned that years ago her natural parents had been able to track her down and had been spying on her ever since. But never once had they attempted to find out what kind of a person she was and what, if anything, she wanted from them. Had they done so, they would have discovered that Betsy was not strong enough to withstand the shock of a sudden confrontation.

Betsy Turner's adoptive parents, here called Gene and Barbara Richards, wanted so much to have children that Barbara had suffered through seven miscarriages before deciding to adopt. Ten years and 25 agencies later, they at last got word that the baby they had longed for was waiting for them. Overjoyed, they set off at once across the state to a home for unwed mothers where, two weeks earlier, Betsy had been born. They had long since bought a car bassinet to carry their new baby in, but Barbara cradled her in her arms throughout the long trip home, crooning lullabies.

Betsy remembers her childhood as a happy one. She has no memory of ever being told she was adopted. "I just always knew it," she says, "and took it for granted." The Richardses' memories are more precise. "We used to tell her that first we'd chosen each other and then we'd chosen her," Barbara says. "Her favorite bedtime story was one Gene made up about how we got her. Night after night, she's climb up on his lap and he'd tell her: 'When we went to get you, we walked into a big room, filled with cribs' and babies. Then we saw one tiny little girl with blue, blue eyes. That was you. You held out your arms to me and right away I knew you had to be mine.'"

From the beginning, the Richardses made no secret of Betsy's adoption. As soon as they got her home they sent out announcements to their many friends. Over the years, as they became increasingly prominent in their community, their comings and goings—as well as Betsy's—were rountinely reported in local newspapers, complete with pictures.

When Betsy was six, the Richardses adopted another little girl. Both their children were dear to them. "We never thought of them as adopted children," Barbara says. "They were simply our girls, and we loved them with all our hearts."

When Betsy was about nine, a new family moved into the neighborhood with a daughter a few years older than Betsy. "I idolized that girl," Betsy says. "I used to tag around after her and treasure every word she threw my way." But soon the words turned cruel. For reasons of her own, the older child began to taunt Betsy for being adopted and to goad her into disobeying her mother, "Why should you do what she says?" she'd say. "She's not even related to you. She doesn't love you the way a real mother would." Eventually she turned other children against Betsy, and they, too, would tease her.

Under this psychological onslaught, Betsy began to have nightmares and would wake up terrified and crying. But she never told her parents what was bothering her for fear of hurting them.

As she neared adolescence, her insecurity deepened. Feeling depressed and displaced, she would lash out at her parents or withdraw into long periods of sulky silence. Once when she was 12, after a trip with her parents during which she had rebelled against something her father had told her to do, she began weeping uncontrollably. When the crying jag didn't stop, her alarmed mother called a psychiatrist. He feared a suicide attempt and promptly ordered Betsy hospitalized. Many adopted children, the doctor told Barbara, have serious trouble during adolescence. "Questions of 'Who am I,' which bother all teenagers, are often much harder on adoptees," he said.

And so it was with Betsy. Looking back at it now, she remembers being almost overwhelmed by the feelings she'd been afraid to face. "How can Mom and Dad love me when they aren't my real parents?" she'd ask herself. Or, "If I had my real parents, things wouldn't be this way."

Hospitalization was good for Betsy. In group and individual therapy sessions she was able to talk about her secret conflicts and to face her own self-doubts. After three weeks, surrounded by adult women with severe emotional and drug problems, she was more than ready to go home.

After that, things went better. With puberty behind her, Betsy was able to believe Barbara when she told her that her "real mother" had loved her very much. "Sometimes giving up a child is a lot harder than keeping it," Barbara explained to her daughter.

As a teenager, Betsy was vivacious and charming. She won high-school prizes and athletic awards. By the time she was a senior, she was ready for the only future she had ever planned—to be a wife and mother.

A month after graduation, she married Brian Turner in their hometown. After the big church ceremony, the couple stood on the steps to receive congratulations. No one noticed the man standing in the gas station across the street.

Soon after the wedding, Brian joined the Navy. As a young service wife with time on her hands, Betsy began to wonder once more about her natural parents. She made a few preliminary inquiries, but when she discovered how complicated and expensive a search would be, and when Gene Richards expressed his reservations, she dropped the effort. She remembers that her father took her to his office at

about that time and showed her a document he had locked in his safe. It was a record of everything he and Barbara had been able to learn about Betsy's natural mother, which they'd saved for just such a moment. From it she learned that she'd been born to an unmarried girl of 18—a dark-haired young woman with slender hands who liked to play the violin.

"It was enough," Betsy now says. It satisfied my curiosity. I guess when I came right down to it, I didn't want to know more." After her children were born (she had three in quick succession), Betsy says she never "gave the matter any more thought."

The children were never told their mother was adopted. They adored their grandparents, who also doted on them, and Betsy's distant past seemed irrelevant.

After the Navy, Brian went into business for himself and worked hard while Betsy concentrated on being an efficient and dedicated homemaker. But within a few years, a series of problems swept into their lives. Their oldest boy developed a severe hearing loss, with attendant psychological problems. The two little girls, reacting to the attention their brother was getting, began demanding an ever greater share of Betsy's time. Strains began showing up between Betsy and Brian, and they went to see a marriage counselor.

They were just begining to get their lives back on track when the stranger appeared at Betsy's door. During the first few minutes of his visit nothing much happened. "He was a well-dressed, good-looking man," says Betsy. "He seemed a nice person—kind, considerate, but very nervous. I thought that was because he was new at his job."

Over a glass of iced tea he brought up the subject of adoption, ostensibly because he'd just seen a TV show on the subject. She'd seen it too and told him she'd been impressed. "Maybe it was because I'm adopted," Betsy said to him.

"Are you?" he responded. "Then the questions I have to ask you should be easy for you to answer." Reading from a packet of index cards, he asked, "What's your opinion on adopted children seeking out their natural parents?"

"I'm very much against it," Betsy said. "Love isn't biological. Your real parents, the parents you love, are the people who brought you up. I used to have some curiosity about my natural mother and father, but no more. I never want to see them."

"Wouldn't you want to find them if one of your children came down with a mysterious disease?" he asked.

"The child would have to be awfully sick," said Betsy. "And I'd have to be sure it was something hereditary."

Just then Betsy's children came in from play. The three-year-old, usually shy, went up to the stranger and climbed onto his lap. "My, you're a beautiful little girl," he said, stroking her cheek. "You look just like your mother." Betsy felt a chill.

Glancing out the window, Betsy noticed there was no car out in front. She asked her visitor if he'd walked. "I parked my car up the street," he said. "It's such an old clunker, I was embarrassed for you to see it."

At that point Betsy took a close look at the man, and noticed "his eyes were shaped like my own and they were blue." Suddenly she had a feeling—a premonition, really—"something awful was going to happen."

"Betsy," he said, calling her by her given name for the first time—Quietly, almost fearfully.

"You're going to tell me something important, aren't you?" she breathed.

"Yes, I am," he answered. "I'm your natural father."

Shocked, Betsy could hardly get words out. "Are you here to hurt me—or my children or parents? Have you come to tell me something horrible?" She could say no more, for she had begun to cry; soon she was shaking with great, wrenching sobs. She felt faint.

For this part, her visitor was flabbergasted at her reaction and almost as upset as she was. "Believe me, Betsy," he said, "I don't want to hurt you. Your mother and I just want you to know we never wanted to give you up. We loved you and we loved each other, but her father wouldn't let us marry. Both of us want you to know we care about you." Betsy stared at him through her tears.

"I drove by here some time ago, and when I saw a boy's bike in the front yard, I knew I had a grandson."

As suddenly as she had lost it, Betsy found her voice. "No, you don't," she screamed. "I won't have you as my father. You can't be a part of my life. You can't claim me after all this time."

Trying to calm her, the man told her the story he'd told no one for more than 30 years. He had been 21, a Catholic, when he had fallen in love with a high-school girl, a Protestant. Two months before she finished school, they discovered she was

pregnant. They wanted to get married, but her father would not hear of it. Rather than sanctioning marriage to a Catholic, he made arrangements to send his daughter away to a home for unwed mothers and to give her baby up for adoption. After Betsy's birth, the girl was allowed to nurse her for a week and they was sent back to her parent

But befor leaving the home, she made friends with one of the nurses and managed to persuade her to make a note of the license plate of the car that would be coming to pick up Betsy and to send it to her. Later the young mother was able to trace the license number to the Richardses and to learn the name of the town where they lived. Her next step was to subscribe to the local newspaper. Over the years, even after she herself had married and had other children. Betsy's mother had combed the paper every day for news of her daughter, carefully clipping and saving each item. By the time Betsy got married, she had a scrapbook 10 inches thick. Meanwhile she had kept in touch with Betsy's father, although he, too, had married someone else. A traveling salesman, he soon was going out of his way to stop by Betsy's town from time to time—and ask questions.

He was in town on the day of Betsy's wedding and had had every intention of standing in the back of the church to watch the ceremony. But instead he had taken up a position across the street and watched from there. After that, he had given up his surveillance. But neither he nor Betsy's mother had ever stopped hoping that somehow they would encounter her again.

The more her visitor told her, the more upset Betsy became. He was still talking when Betsy dashed to the kitchen and phoned Brian at work, pleading with him to come home at once. Her husband was busy. "Can't it wait?" he asked sharply.

"Please," Betsy sobbed. "I've never begged in my life, but now I'm begging. I need you. Please come now."

When he got home Brian found his wife near hysteria. "Brian," she sobbed. "This man has something to tell you."

The man hesitated. "I hope my news won't upset you the way it has Betsy,"he said. "I came here to tell her that I'm her natural father."

"You are?" Brian said coolly, not upset at all. That was when Betsy says the trouble began—when neither Brian nor anyone else could understand the violent impact the revelation had on her. Brian's "so what" attitude bothered her almost as much as the news itself. "He couldn't seem to understand why I couldn't just take it all in my stride and go on the way I always had."

Despite her reaction, the man pressed a note into Betsy's hand as he was leaving. On it he had written his name and phone number and those of her natural mother. His final words were, "All I wanted was to touch you and tell you I have cared."

Betsy said nothing, but now she says, "At that instant I wanted to run after him. Even though I hated what had happened, I wanted to tell him that I cared about him too. But after you've let 30 years go by, you can't pick up again. At least, I couldn't."

Fighting her way through her tangled emotions, Betsy decided to make the call he'd urged her to. "I wanted a woman to answer and say she didn't know what I was talking about. I wanted it all to be a lie." Instead, she heard a voice that sounded almost exactly like her own. "Mrs. Anderson," she said. "This is Betsy Turner. Do you know who I am?"

"Of course," was the answer. "I've been praying that you'd call, but I didn't think you would."

"It's true, then?

"Yes, it is, honey."

Why did you do this to me?"

The woman's voice trembled. "Because I wanted to see you so badly. I never wanted to give you up. I love you"

Betsy was struggling for words. "But you know you're not the mother I love."

"I know. All I did was give birth to you. Your mother is Barbara Richards." She paused, then Said, "Did your father scare you? I told him if he did I'd kill him."

"You're a stranger to me."

"I am to you, but you're not to me. Your father and I have followed you all your life. I have newspaper pictures of you that go back almost to the beginning. My favorite is the one of you in the toy store at Christmas."

Betsy felt sick. She knew the conversation was real and yet she couldn't accept it. But still the woman continued to talk, pouring out more details—her father's disapproval, her subsequent marriage and motherhood, her business success. "I want to do something for you," she said. "I have money. May I buy you a car?"

"No," said Betsy. "And please don't feel guilty about me. Giving me up was the best thing you could have done for me."

But the woman kept talking, calling her "honey," telling her she loved her, that she wanted to see her. "It was as if she expected instant intimacy," Betsy says.

Before she hung up, however, she assured Betsy she'd never try to reach her again. From then on any overtures would be up to Betsy.

For first time in her life Betsy had a problem she couldn't take to her parents. Barbara was recovering from surgery and it was no time to risk hurting or upsetting her. Gene was out of town. Brian, clearly, was unsympathetic. That night, when she needed to talk and to have him put his arm around her and tell her she'd be all right, he announced that he was tired and went to bed.

Within days Betsy had sunk into an emotional crisis that Barbara Richards now describes as a reprise of her adolescent troubles. "When Betsy was finally able to tell me what had happened, she was desperate for reassurance" say Barbara. "I sat up with her for two nights at her house, telling her over and over again that Gene and I loved her no matter what happened, that we were her real parents, that her natural mother and father had signed away any rights that they might once have had to her."

It helped only a litte. After days of hysterical weeping, she had a medical checkup, which indicated that her blood pressure has soared "into the stroke range." Alarmed, her doctor told her she had to get a hold of herself or else she was going to have a physical and emotional breakdown. But she couldn't seem to do it. Her sleep became fitful, her periods irregular. Her relations with Brian strained almost to the breaking point. Morbid thoughts possessed her. At night she would dream of dying in a hospital with her natural father waiting in a hallway outside. During the day she was afraid to go out of her house and would compulsively cling to her children when they were around—and eat. Her weight ballooned.

Finally she made an appointment with the marriage counselor she and Brian had consulted earlier. Patiently, he explained to her that she had sustained a tremendous psychological shock, aggravated by the recent problems she and Brian had been having. What she was feeling, he said, was a form of depression—depression which was actually anger turned against herself. "There was guilt and rage and frustration, all mixed up in me," she now says. "The counselor was able to explain it to me, but he said that I was the only one who could do anything about it."

For a long time she couldn't do it. "All I wanted," she says, "was to crawl into a hole and pull it down on top of me. I couldn't face reality." Finally, one day, with her life a shambles, she dropped to her knees to pray. "I told God I knew I was the only one who could straighten myself out and I asked Him for the strength to do it."

At this writing, things have begun to improve. Slowly but steadily Betsy has been regaining control. Her relationship with Brian is improving. She is now able to talk about why his initial reaction bothered her so deeply. "I couldn't deal with his lack of emotion," she says. "It came across to me as lack of interest. Now we're understanding each other again."

She has made no further contact with either of her natural parents, nor they with her. "I wonder if they're hurt and angry or relieved, and if they can understand why I can't handle ghosts from my past. If they read this story I wonder whether they'll realize that what they did was wrong and will stay out of my life from now on."

The ending of Betsy's story has not yet, of course, been written. Like all the rest of us, Betsy is living her life from day to day, unaware of what lies ahead. She tries not to think of those two strangers out there who gave her life and doubtless are still waiting to hear from her. Instead, she's concentrating on the parents she has and needs and loves. *They* are her real mother and father. "That's why," she says, "some things are better left alone."

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Mrs. Richardson, and the article to which you alluded will be entered into the record.

We have just been informed that the meeting will be delayed until 1:30, so we will be able to get through Mr. Pierce's presentation and some questions.

Mr. Pierce, I understand that you have also brought along a short video presentation. Please, feel free to present it at the appropriate time.

Mr. PIERCE. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator, I would like, because of the time factor, if we might, to ask you to please enter our statement for the record, and maybe we could show that videotape now, so that if you have some questions, we would like to respond to them.

Senator DENTON. What is the duration of the tape, sir?

Mr. PIERCE. The tape originally appeared on NBC Magazine, and the purpose of the tape is to really show you and to demonstrate more clearly than I think any other statement could our major concern, and it is that major concern that you have brought up time and time again today, and that is what in the world has ever happened to infant adoption?

What has happened to infant adoption in this country is that for the last 10 or 20 years, most of the interest in adoption in this country has been in finding identities, not on placing babies, and it has scared the willies out of people.

This particular tape will give you a perfect example of why confidentiality is important.

[The following is a transcription of a videotape presented to the subcommittee.]

Is it disruptive and perhaps destructive to have children put up for adoption long ago turn up suddenly at the front doorstep?

Well, now there is a campaign to change these laws on the ground that people have a right to know who their natural parents were. Jack Perkins, you have looked into this. What is happening?

Mr. PERKINS. David, there are so many adopted children who are searching for, are driven to find their—we shall not say their real parents because, of course, their adoptive parents are their real parents—but to find their birth parents. And there are some birth parents who would like to know whatever became of the children they had put out for adoption, and there are many reunions between them, and they are often wonderful moments full of sweet tears.

But in many cases, we have found across this country, the tears, when they come, are not sweet.

NARRATOR. In Houston, Dorothy Robertson, who spent 4 years searching for her birth mother; she had been adopted as a baby and grew up with fantasies.

Ms. ROBERTSON. As a child, you know, I would think about my mother, and I had a fantasy that she was in love with my father and they were in college, or something, at the time and just for some reason could not be married. She was in the process of a divorce when I first found her, and she would call me sometimes in the middle of the night when she had been drinking and, you know, try to talk to me about it.

NARRATOR. Finding her mother and the truth behind her fantasies was disappointing, but the worst moments were yet to come.

Ms. ROBERTSON. I did not meet my half-sister until I guess it was about a year later. She was living in Florida and I went to Florida to visit her, and evidently she was envious that I was the one that was given up for adoption and that I had had some advantages in life that she had not had. And she verbally and physically attacked me and she broke my nose, and after that, it was not hard to close the door. After that incident, I was kind of indifferent.

NARRATOR. In San Marino, Calif., Ann Merrill, who located her birth mother and wrote her letter after letter, getting no response, and so went to see her and it was a mean confrontation.

Ms. MERRILL. I knocked on her door, and everything stopped; the radio went off and there was complete silence. And I called to her

and I told her who I was and I asked her please not to be afraid. And I looked down at the door knob, which was not a door knob; it was just a piece of wood sticking out. The door was rotting, and it was a very unusual place, to say the least.

And I reached for this stub of wood and I pushed it, because I thought, "I am going to go and see you; you know, I am here now and it has taken a long time." And as I pushed it, the door gave a little and, all of a sudden, it just came right back. And she said, "You leave that door alone, lady." And I begged her to please open the door, and there was more name-calling, and "go back where you came from."

And we continued this going back and forth until she said, "If you do not get away from my door, I am going to kill you with a meat cleaver and I do not want your blood on my hands."

NARRATOR. Because of horror stories like these, Mrs. Jenny Parker in Strongsville, Ohio heads a group called Rights of Adoptees Parents, which lobbies to try to keep adoption records closed.

Mrs. PARKER. Thank you for calling ROAP. Mrs. Parker speaking; may I help you? Sure, I would be glad to. We are parents of adopted children that are very much opposed to search groups that reunite adopted children with their birth parents.

NARRATOR. Mrs. Parker has two sons and a daughter; the daughter was adopted. Mrs. Parker lives, she says, in almost daily fear that some time, the girl's birth mother might show up and try to reassert her motherhood. It is because of that fear that she asked us please not to show the daughter on camera. An old photograph on the wall, she said, would be all right to show. Her fear is her cause.

Mrs. PARKER. See, we do not have a story to tell. We are not searching for anyone; we are just trying to keep our family intact and keep this strange person from knocking on our door.

NARRATOR. As you know, there is quite a movement in this country to get adoption records opened up. Does that scare you?

Mrs. PARKER. If they want to start, say, January 1982 and open the records and every adoptive parent that adopts from that point on knows that the records are open and knows that they will be contacted someday, then start from there, but not the retroactiveness of it. Leave me out of it; I did not agree to that when I adopted.

NARRATOR. Her cause finds sympathy among some legislators. In Washington, New Hampshire's Senator, Gordon Humphrey.

Senator HUMPHREY. I think that to open records in the way that has been proposed would be very damaging to the whole idea of adoption. Adoption is not just a matter of long-term foster-home care; it is supposed to be a real relationship in the same degree that natural parenthood is.

If I were thinking about adopting a child—and, as a matter of fact, my wife and I are—I would give it really extra serious thought if I knew that in 18 years, the natural parent or parents could show up and fundamentally alter the relationship.

Mrs. PARKER. They do not all work out happy. We have read several articles where adoptees are presenting themselves at their birth parents' doorstep and absolutely disrupting a whole family unit.

NARRATOR. Twenty-three years ago in this hospital in Flint, Mich., Mrs. Anna Mae Kree gave birth to an unwanted boy. She had been raped 9 months before; decided to bear the baby and put it up for immediate adoption. And that, she and her husband thought, would be the end of it.

Well, 23 years later, a young man knocked on their front door.

Mrs. KREE. I guess I just wanted to crawl off in a corner and die.

Mr. KREE. I am ashamed to say this now, or something, but at that precise moment, if it had been a couple of weeks later during hunting season—if our boy had had a shotgun in the cellar, or something, I would have fired a shot.

NARRATOR. Why?

Mr. KREE. Well, just coming in and interrupting our family life—he did walk in.

NARRATOR. Did it ever occur to you over these years that the child might one day come to find you?

Mrs. KREE. I thought about it when I saw these other things on television about these reunions and how children had found their adopted parents.

NARRATOR. What did you think about the possibility?

Mrs. KREE. It scared the devil out of me. I wanted the boy to be happy. Nobody wants a child, no matter how it is brought into the world—I do not want anybody to be unhappy. But I did not want to disrupt my kids' lives that I had at home. It scared me that they are making it so easy; that these children can find the parents that just do not want to be found.

NARRATOR. This is the young man, the child of the rapist, who found them.

ADOPTED CHILD. I was bound and determined that I was going to find them, and it worked out, and that is my satisfaction.

NARRATOR. But in the Kree home, his showing up was so traumatic; the children had never been told of the rape. Two of them were so upset, they left home; the family was devastated.

Mr. KREE. When the boy showed up, for the next 3 days, my wife stayed up in her bedroom; she never even came out of the bedroom. I took 30 days' sick leave.

NARRATOR. So, what arrived at your door that night was not just a young man, but the memories of the terrible thing that had happened to you 23 years ago.

Mrs. KREE. It is a feeling that is hard to explain—one of fear; one that made me feel like I was filth. Even though I knew I was not, the feeling is there and it is not something you can wash away. I have thought several times that I would like to just go off and die; that I wish I had the strength to ask God to let me die.

I do not know what keeps me going. I know this should not happen anymore. I would like to fight the system; I would like to find a better way.

NARRATOR. On this program in the past, we have seen beautiful reunions between adopted children and birth parents. What we are showing here tonight is not to say that all reunions end ugly; it is just to say that they do not all end happy.

[End of videotape transcription.]

Mr. PIERCE. And that is it, Senator. It is a very traumatic tape. I have seen it several times and it never ceases to move me; it never ceases to move the millions of people that we represent.

We know that the majority of people who have adopted children or who are adopted are perfectly happy in their current situation and are content and have no need for contact. We also believe that in terms of the bill that is before you—Senator Levin's bill, and his intentions and those of his colleagues, are undoubtedly well-meaning.

We, too, are trying to meet the needs of those people who do want to volunteer to have contact, but we want to do it on a State level. We know this does not need Federal dollars. With all the things that we need to do at the Federal level, we do not need to spend $1 million, or as Senator Levin's testimony indicates now, $800,000, to do what a whole lot of people are perfectly capable of doing on a voluntary basis.

It is almost like that Model State Adoption Act that you asked Warren Master about earlier today. You asked him if, after a year of bipartisan objections, they had finally gotten their work done to get it cleaned up. He said, "Well, the major focus will be on special needs adoption." Well, it sounds like major focus means they still want to involve themselves in opening records and in infant adoption.

I hope that the Department of Health and Human Services will pay attention to the bipartisan and incredible national reaction they have had.

I would like to add one personal note, if I might, and that is that it has been a thrill to see your interest in the area of adoption. It has been a long time—I have been in Washington 12 years—since I have seen a Senator take such a personal interest in the face of a hatchet job by the press. The New York Times seems to have it in for your bill; they constantly misrepresent and misreport your bill.

The Washington Post, when they cannot do their own hatchet job, picks one up from United Press International. I think that in the face of all of this misreporting and ridicule, your steadfast devotion to adoption is terrific. You really do believe in alternatives to abortion, and with the kind of leadership that you have shown and the kind of position that you occupy, just in the next few years you can turn around what has deteriorated in the last 20 years.

In the last 20 years, we have seen tens of thousands, and literally millions of children who could have had wonderful, happy homes, not be born and not have those happy homes. Before your term is over—and I hope you will be here for a long time—I think, together, you and all the millions of people around the country who support what you believe in can make all the difference in the world.

I just want to say that the real editorials that should be written and that will be written are in the millions of happy adoptive couples and the millions of people across the country who really support what you are doing. Even the Washington Post poll that they printed said that the majority of the people would not recommend an abortion for their own 15-year-old.

I just want to encourage you and I want to tell you thank you. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have for me.

Senator DENTON. I would like to thank you, Mr. Pierce, because I do need encouragement. It is wearing to be misrepresented as consistently as I have been. I do not mind being criticized; I do not mind being disagreed with. I do not mind having journalism slanted, but when facts are made up and presented as the opposite of what the real facts are, it is dismaying, not so much personally, because I knew I would face that risk, but in terms of my optimism about doing any good up here.

Mr. PIERCE. Well, you have got a tremendous cause. Quite clearly, if Senator Denton, after years, is starting to call the attention of this country to a problem that a whole lot of other people did not pay any attention to for 10 years, it makes a whole lot of other people look like they could not see the forest for the trees, and you can.

Senator DENTON. Well, I want to thank you, too, for your unsolicited letter, a copy of which I just got, to the New York Times on that matter. I hope they print it.

I would ask the counsel, Mr. Harrington, the first question. Could you briefly summarize the experiences of some of the States that have enacted registry laws already, sir?

Mr. HARRINGTON. Well, there have been about five such States which enacted pure registry laws. But in addition to those five States, there are three States which enacted registry laws with other provisions. One such State was North Dakota, and the North Dakota social services board did issue some statistics which I obtained on the first 18 months of the operation of its registry with provision for a search, and this was found to be successful. It provided a service which was needed in that State.

The other States which enacted a pure registry system have not had enough time to be able to publish results on the operation of the registry. As you understand and as was mentioned in testimony, a very large number of participants would have to register first before you would begin to see results, and some time would be involved. Since we have only had these laws since 1979, there have not been the results which you seek.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Cramer, in all fairness, your testimony, with undoubted sincerity and accuracy, conflicted with the testimony which I considered to have been sort of one-sided—in fact, entirely so—by the tape. That has nothing to do with my own judgment of this matter, except to note that there are sincere and very deeply emotional feelings involved here.

Ms. CRAMER. Senator, there are millions of us who have not had sensationalism such as was depicted on that television screen. There are millions of us who have had happy, happy reunions with our birth parents without penalty. That happens to be very, as you said, one-sided.

We are talking about opening records here, but, Senator, this bill, 989, has nothing to do with opening records. It has only to do with two consenting adults, aged 21 or over. We are discussing mutual consent.

It is a very straightforward bill; it has no hidden meanings, no hidden objectives. So, talking about all of these other things, such as the family having an upheaval, and all of that—it would not happen, because it is not even germane to this bill.

We are talking about two people who wish to find each other. That is all this is, nothing else; no one else is involved. Being very active in the adoptive movement, I can tell you, sir, that I do not think I know anyone, for example, whose mother has told the child or the adult adoptee who the father is. My own mother has not told me. I have no friends who have ever been told. It is all very confidential.

This is a depicting of a very one-sided thing; this does not happen everyday. How many people are raped everyday? Of course, it happens, sir, but what Mrs. Kree was talking about was the finding of parents who do not wish to be found. This bill would never, never allow that. This is two people who wish to be found, not one—two. Such a thing would never come up with 989; it would be impossible. So, that is the point of this.

I have nothing but empathy for people who find themselves in the position of Mrs. Kree and people like this, and I understand; you have no idea how much I understand. It is very tough being adopted, Senator, and I want to help other people because I know the feeling of looking in the mirror and not knowing whom your face comes from and what your genetic traits are.

It was finally such a joy to meet my own mother, without penalty to either one of us, and certainly without penalty to my adopted family. I have two families now, Senator. I visit one at Christmas and the other at Christmas, and nobody thinks anything of it.

So, believe me, what you saw on television was one-sided, and it has nothing whatsoever to do with the bill that is before you—absolutely nothing, sir.

Senator DENTON. You are saying that people have a right to their identity. Do you not believe that one's identity is, in one real sense, the result of upbringing in the family which adopted them?

Ms. CRAMER. Oh, yes, sir, I certainly do. But I had the opportunity to see first-hand, at least with me, what was what on heredity versus environment, because I took 15 years out of my life to study the kind of person I wished to be; I really did that, sir, for 15 years. I read Aristotle; I read all the philosophical business I could put my hands on, and psychology and sociology, to evolve my own character.

I can tell you that I did that a lot on my own; of course, my parents were wonderful to me and they helped me. I want to tell you something else. The day after I found my birth mother, I went to my adopted father's and mother's grave in Arizona and I sat on top of it, Senator. And I said, "Listen, yesterday I found my birth mother, but I want you to know you are still my parents, and I love you and I will always love you." Senator, that is the truth.

This does not damage anyone, Senator; please, understand that.

Senator DENTON. Well, your experience certainly did not.

Ms. CRAMER. No, sir.

Senator DENTON. That is really not the question; it is the generalization therefrom which is in question.

Ms. CRAMER. Yes, sir, I know.

Senator DENTON. Mrs. Richardson, how widespread do you believe your view of the confidentiality of adoption is across this country? Is it a point of view held by a minority of families?

Mrs. RICHARDSON. No, sir. I believe that the silent majority of happy, well-adjusted adoptive parents would agree with me, as well as adoptees. I feel God has chosen each one of us to be in a family. It may be a foster family, it may be a biological family, or it may be an adoptive family. That is enough for me.

Senator DENTON. Mr. Pierce, do you believe that States will be responsive to your efforts to see State-level registries established?

Mr. PIERCE. Absolutely, Senator. State legislators are considering these bills at a greater rate every year. If you look at just the increase in the number of State legislatures that have introduced voluntary registry bills over the last couple or 3 years, it is clearly coming.

Not only that, but the Council of State Legislators has a registry bill—in fact, the very one that Mr. Harrington referred to from North Dakota—as one of the suggested pieces of legislation that they are recommending in the next session. It is one of our major platform items, and just as we are quite aggressive in trying to educate people about the benefits of infant adoption, I guarantee you that our State-level committees are going to be quite aggressive in educating State legislators about the fact that the State level registry is the way to do it.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, sir.

In conclusion, I will just make a personal Statement of my present position and you all can get at me in any way you choose later. But I have the impression that the process by which two or three involved parties can voluntary consent to a meeting, the consequences of which would result in the unwilling identity of the third, is the question which many have regarding the efficacy of this bill.

I doubt that anyone here would be against a process by which all three parties consented and wanted to meet. Is that correct?

Mrs. Richardson, you are the only one not nodding.

Mrs. RICHARDSON. You are talking about both birth parents and the adult adoptee?

Senator DENTON. Both parents and the adoptee, yes.

Mrs. RICHARDSON. And where do you put the adoptive parents in this issue?

Senator DENTON. That is a very good question. All right, then; let us say all five.

Mrs. RICHARDSON. That makes it different, because I feel that if the adoptive parents have brought up the child with the positive facts about their adoption, it fills in the identity feelings and they know who they are as they are growing up.

Senator DENTON. It is almost a Solomon-like question between all three and all five, and I am a long way from being Solomon.

Mrs. RICHARDSON. We went to court, and the children became legally ours. The birth parents relinquished their rights when they signed the adoption papers.

Senator DENTON. Well, thank you very much for being here. I think that the subcommittee has learned a lot about S. 989, and I have nothing but admiration for the testimony of each of you. It is

a worthwhile process and we have benefitted from your presence. Thank you.

At this point I order printed all statements of those who could not attend and other pertinent material submitted for the record.

[The material referred to follows:]

Testimony of the National Committee for Adoption, Inc.

My name is William Pierce. I am the President and chief executive officer of the National Committee For Adoption (NCFA) and on behalf of our member agencies, board and other affiliates -- agencies and individuals -- I want to thank you for inviting NCFA to testify today.

NCFA is a national, voluntary membership organization for agencies and individuals. NCFA works for infant adoption because we believe it is a positive social institution that builds families, that promotes permanent homes for children and that it is a valuable option for young, single or troubled parents. We support the right to confidentiality for all those involved in the adoptive circle. To carry forward that principle -- that both the biological mother and the biological father, as well as the adult adoptee, has a legal right to have their confidentiality secured and maintained -- we have been working, since our founding, toward the goal of the establishment of state-level adoption registries. At the request of this Subcommittee, we will direct our testimony to this area of our work. Supplemental materials about NCFA, detailing our other goals and our services, are attached as part of this statement and we ask that it be made a part of the Hearing record.

You have heard from two executives of NCFA charter member agencies today, Mrs. Piester and Mr. Harris. They have discussed their operations with respect to serving young, pregnant women and with respect to providing adoption services to "special needs" children. These are major areas of concern for our organization. NCFA also provides services to agencies serving infertile couples who are considering agency adoption as a way to build their families. We monitor and are active in all areas that touch upon the important and vital service of adoption.

My comments for this hearing will focus on our organizational position on S. 989, the Adoption Identification Act of 1981, which has been introduced by Senator Levin and is co-sponsored by Senators Cranston, Randolph and Moynihan. This bill, as Senator Levin has indicated, would provide for a national computerized databank -- a clearinghouse -- through which an adoptee over the age of 21, and his or her birth parent, or siblings, or other relatives could communicate if such mutual interest in communicating exists.

NCFA appreciates the efforts of Senator Levin and his colleagues to propose a solution to the "open adoption records" controversy by designing legislation which aims to avoid "intrusion" into the life or privacy of members of the adoption circle. Since the approach only requires the involvement of two members of the adoptive circle -- the adult adoptee and any other member -- the probability that the identity of other members of the circle, especially the biological mother or biological father, would be disclosed is great. For this and other reasons we specify below, NCFA therefore cannot endorse or support S. 989 in its current form.

We have two major concerns with S. 989. First, we do not believe the Federal government should become involved in adoption records legislation, including involving itself in the establishment of a national computerized databank to match adoption identification. As a number of Senators wrote to the Secretary of Health and Human Services:

> "When, under what circumstances, and subject to what conditions birth records may be opened are issues to

> be determined by our State legislatures....In most States, an adoptee with a genuine need for information concerning natural origins can, by proving that need through judicial or administrative proceedings, secure release of the information needed. We are not ready to tell State legislators that they are wrong in refusing to enact open-records-upon-demand legislation. Under our Federal system, that is a matter for their decision." [June 4, 1980, letter to HHS Secretary Harris from Senators Hatch, Helms, Humphrey and Tower.]

Second, even if we were persuaded that a Federal legislative remedy were called for, based on our discussions and preliminary drafting work on legislation for state-level adoption registries, including the technical assistance we have provided State legislators, we find the registry "mechanism" proposed in S. 989 to be flawed in several respects. Chiefly, S. 989 lacks:

- a requirement that all three parties -- adult adoptee, biological mother and biological father -- be voluntarily registered before there is a "match;"
- a requirement that a qualified post-legal adoption services worker, usually a social worker, employed by a licensed or approved agency should be involved as an intermediary once there is a match;
- a requirement that protects confidential files of courts and adoption agencies from indiscriminate inspection;
- a requirement specifying a penalty for any agency, entity or

other person who violates the confidentiality of sealed records.

To illustrate our concerns, and our chief point that searches and contacts without consent and without appropriate safeguards don't work, we would like to request the permission of the Chairman to run a videotape excerpt from "NBC Magazine," with David Brinkley, for May 7, 1981. As David Brinkley noted in his introduction, sometimes the results of searches and contact "...are a disaster." And as NBC correspondent Jack Perkins says, contacts are anything but sweet.

Mr. Chairman, may we run the videotape? We will provide, for the Hearing record, that portion of the NBC official transcript corresponding to the segment.

* * *

[Video portion.]

* * *

These real people are representative of many who would be hurt -- figuratively destroyed -- if inappropriate adoption data were to be gathered and shared under the auspices of a Federal databank.

There are other practical concerns -- commonsense reasons for our four major objections to S. 989.

The first is that without all three key parties to the adoption giving consent, it is likely that the privacy of one would be violated. In the most common instance, where only the biological mother and the adult adoptee's consent is required, is there anything to keep the biological mother from sharing the name of the biological father -- or any man she wishes to name as the biological father -- with the

adult adoptee? What would your question be, Mr. Chairman, after you had asked all of your questions of your biological mother, other than the most obvious: what about my biological father? The same, of course, could be true of the match between an adult adoptee and a biological father -- he could name a woman who did not want her identity known.

Our second concern, that people with special skills and training employed by responsible agencies be involved in the contact process, grows out of just the sort of tragic, naive, sometimes callous approach of the "searchers." Remember what Mrs. Creed's son said: "I was bound and determined that I was going to find them and it worked out and that's my satisfaction." It didn't work out for Mrs. Creed and her family. A skilled intermediary would have made all the difference in the world to her and her family.

Our third concern, that confidential court and agency files be protected from indiscriminate inspection, is most dramatically illustrated by another development that NBC television reported on. In this instance, a soap-opera theme became reality and a man dying of bone cancer needed to have identifying information so that he could ask for a bone-marrow transplant. After weeks of headlines and court process, the man turned down a possible compromise from the lawyer for his biological mother for an anonymous transplant. What had been so clearly a case of humanitarian concern shifted to wondering about why a person dying of cancer would turn down a medical approach to a medical problem. We offer, as an attachment, a copy of a news item dated June 5, 1981, reporting on this case.

Finally, we are concerned that without any penalty the new databank

would represent an open invitation to continue conducting searches and disrupting people's lives.

We would like to make three final points about S. 989.

Most important of all is the fact that the majority of biological parents do not wish to be contacted. Ninety percent of those interviewed in one large sample reported in the New York Times said they "...dreaded the thought of a confrontation with their past." We have attached a copy of the Times piece to our testimony.

Secondly, S. 989 duplicates what already exists. There is no need to establish a Federal databank when many search groups, including CUB, ALMA, Orphan Voyage and the International Soundex Reunion Registry, maintain similar registries. When I talked with the sponsor of one registry proposal recently in Albany, New York, he told me that ALMA opposed his bill -- because it duplicated their service.

Third, S. 989 would authorize the expenditure of $1 million during its first year. We question the expenditure of any Federal funds for purposes already being supported by non-tax funds. Nearly 10,000 persons have availed themselves of the International Soundex Reunion Registry -- at no cost. ALMA charges an initial $30 registration fee. So why spend scarce money to duplicate these voluntary efforts?

Like Senator Levin and his colleagues, we want to deal with the issues of confidentiality, contact and records with "...care, thoughtfulness, and compassion." Unfortunately, S. 989 falls short of the mark. But we are prepared to work with legislators and concerned people at every level of government to achieve legislation which embodies these noble goals and meets the needs of the individuals involved in the adoption circle.

Again, thank you for inviting us to appear before you. We would be pleased to respond to your questions.

# # #

WLP:CPM/ms

ATTACHMENTS: 1) 1981 GOALS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ADOPTION, INC.

2) brochure outlining services provided by NCFA as direct benefits of membership

3) list of officers, board and charter agencies of NCFA

4) portion of May 7, 1981, transcript of "NBC Magazine" concerning searches that did not work

5) June 5, 1981, clipping from the Washington Star

6) July 31, 1978, clipping from The New York Times

7) Nov. 19, 1980, clipping from The Dallas Morning News

(NOTE: In the interest of economy, the attachments listed above were retained in the files of the committee where they will be available for examinations upon request.)

POSITION PAPER REGARDING FEDERAL BILL S-989

A proposed demonstration program for a National Computerized Adoption Identification Center.

As members of the Illinois Adoptive Family Association, we are registering our opposition to S-989 and request this position paper be filed as testimony before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Sub-Committee on Aging, Family, and Human Services. The Illinois Adoptive Family Association has statewide representation. Our goal is the protection of the confidentiality of adoptive families, as well as the silent majority of biological parents and adoptees who are unable to speak out. A recent survey by the Child Welfare League of America indicates that 5% of the population of the U.S. are adoptees. Of this number, 2% have shown an interest in further information on their adoption. To bring these statistics into perspective, this equates to 1/10 of 1% of the total population of the United States. In June, the Illinois Adoptive Family Association demonstrated to our state legislature that the emotional needs of a few should not supercede the rights of the majority. State Registry Bill HB 937 failed passage on our recommendation.

We feel there are sections of this title that lack adequate foresight and show little regard for the real concerns of the majority of people involved in the adoptive process.

Section 301

1. The bill makes an assumption that there is a significant need for an "Adoption Identification System". We know of no demographic studies of licensed child welfare agencies to support this conclusion.
2. Birth parents include a biological mother and father. Since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of Stanley vs. Illinois (1972), alleged fathers have been included in adoption proceedings. In order to have a just and equal balance of human rights, a voluntary registry must consider how to protect the rights of confidentiality of both biological parents. For example, if a biological mother matched with an adult adoptee, but the biological father chose not to participate, how would his privacy be protected? What penalties would be imposed on revealing identifying information on parties not registered?

Section 301 (continued)

3. We are opposed to the inclusion of biological relatives other than the biological mother and father because their rights to privacy could be inadvertently violated.
4. We question the protection of confidentiality under a computerized network.

Section 302

1. There is no specification of the professional qualifications or accreditation of the public or private non-profit organization contracted to manage the proposed system. What measures will be taken to insure the confidentiality of records when the data will be held by a private or public agency? What security system will be created by the HHS to insure the confidentiality of the records and their release?
2. There is no justification for the Federal government assuming or subsidizing the cost of legalized matching.
3. What criteria would the Secretary of HHS use to determine "The number of searches ending in a successful match"? A match can be made but could be disappointing or painful. There is no provision for those matched to be referred to a clinical social worker, with professional expertise in adoption, for counseling prior to the voluntary contact.

Section 303

1. We agree an adoptee should be beyond his teens, but feel a person is more secure in his or her identity at age 25. Registration by biological parents should not be allowed until the adoptee has reached the age of 25.
2. What information is needed to effect a match? Will any needed information compromise the privacy of other members in the adoptive circle?
3. If the whereabouts of a biological mother and/or father are "unknown", this does not mean they are relinquishing their rights to confidentiality. Their rights to privacy are violated by permitting a biological sibling, biological grandmother, or other biological relative to initiate "the locating process".
4. "Under such other circumstances" should not be defined by the Secretary of HHS, but should be determined case by case through the judicial system.
5. The full cost should be made by the searching parties and not underwritten by the Federal government.

Section 303 (continued)

6. Inclusion of statewide identification systems would be an unnecessary cost to the individual States. Some States currently have registry systems that use intermediaries to search for unregistered parties and are not truly voluntary or mutual. If a person does not register they are stating, by their silence, they do not want to be contacted.

Section 304

A $1,000,000 appropriation for fiscal year 1982 is imprudent in our inflationary economy and cannot be justified as a priority expenditure. Also, as a demonstration program, this title carries no limitation guideline defining its lifetime. In a productivity conscious economy, initiation of spending without regard to any accepted norms of cost effectiveness is unconscionable.

Summation

This is not an ordinary piece of legislation. It is a humanistic issue. The possibility of disrupting people's lives is very real and frightening. We, as the Illinois Adoptive Family Association, are dedicated to preserving those lives as well as the security and stability of our own family units. The laws of our Country are predicated on the needs of the majority. Why institute a law that will cause interference in American family life when there is no justifiable or overwhelming cause? It's a sad commentary when members of the adoptive circle have to fight for confidentiality which was contractually guaranteed to them at the time of adoption.

We trust you will consider our concerns when S-989 is discussed at the public hearings scheduled for July 23, 1981, in Washington. There are a great number of citizens, like ourselves, with a watchful eye on this type of legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted by:
The Illinois Adoptive Family Association

Candace Stec, President

Denice E. Fennessy, Chairman

Barbara L. Cassin, Legislative Liason

BLC:df

AMERICAN ADOPTION CONGRESS

TESTIMONY OF PENNY CALLAN PARTRIDGE, M.S.W.
on S.989: ADOPTION IDENTIFICATION ACT OF 1981
to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Aging, Family and Human Services

My name is Penny Callan Partridge. I am an adoptee, an adoptive parent and a clinical social worker. I am a founder of the Adoption Forum of Philadelphia and am currently the President of the American Adoption Congress.

The AAC is an umbrella group for individuals and organizations that have, as common ground, the belief that all members of the adoption community would be better served if there were less secrecy in adoption. Our members include adoptees, adoptive parents, birthparents of adoptees, and adoption professionals. Although we are still in the process of setting up formal group membership, we represent an informal network of of over two hundred small and large groups across the United States and Canada.

Most of us have come to know, through personal experience as well as through contact with hundreds of people with similar experience, that in traditional extrafamilial infant adoption, some major mistakes have been made:

- It was a mistake for anyone to suggest or anyone to believe that a birthparent should or could be guaranteed permanent anonymity from a daughter or son relinquished for adoption.
- It was a mistake to believe - and to institutionalize the belief - that adoptive families are so weak that they can at no time tolerate any access of their sons or daughters to their genetic relatives, who are potentially a critical resource for the physical and emotional health of the adoptee.
- It was a mistake to place adoptees in the position of going through their entire lives with altered and censored life histories, to expect them to do without certain basic and intimate information about themselves so that the presumed needs of both sets of their parents might be served instead. In fact, we have found that their experience of being deprived of part of their life histories has often had a detrimental effect on their relationships with their adoptive families as well as on their relationships with the families they make as adults.

I offer the following comments in support of S.989:

1. The Adoption Identification Act of 1981 would serve as the Federal Government's recognition of the needs and desires of many biological relatives separated through adoption to locate each other.
2. It would grant no access to any records considered sealed by the state or county in which they are kept; but in spite of any state legislation that may exist now or in the future, it would allow for those relatives who wish to be accessible to each other to be so.

3. It is necessary that such a registry not exist simply state by state, because people can be born in one state, adopted in another, and live in many states during their lives. Likewise, people can relinquish children for adoption in a state in which they have never lived and never will. One national registry with a well publicized mailing address will allow more people to know it exists and how they can become registered if they so choose.

4. Most individuals and groups affiliated with the AAC have had experience with the use of the International Soundex Reunion Registry run by Emma Vilardi; and we know that Ms. Vilardi's system and expertise would be available in the setting up of a federally funded registry. The ISRR has been maintained with undisputable skill and integrity.

5. If a federally funded registry required that a birthparent find the other birthparent of the adoptee sought, and obtain that person's permission to be part of the registry - and S.989 does not make such a requirement, but opponents of the bill have suggested that it should - it is difficult to imagine either adoptees or birthparents choosing to use the registry. One parent of a "child" should not be able to block access between that "child" and his or her other parent. And even if the other parent had no objection to such access, she or he might be extremely difficult to find.

6. A registry such as S.989 proposes does not serve the needs of all adoptees or birth relatives of adoptees. For instance, an adoptee could register, not knowing that a birthparent had died before such a registry was available. Should a birthparent's death prevent the possibility of an adoptee ever knowing that birthparent's name? On the other hand, this kind of nationally recognized and supported registry gives people an important option as a way of finding each other, knowing that there is mutual desire and readiness to identify themselves to each other. As this is the ideal way for an adoptee and a birth relative to meet, it would be truly sad if the opportunity for this way did not exist.

Re: S989 Creation of a National Computerized Adoption Identification Center

TO: The Honorable Members of the United States Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources

FROM: Jean M Paton, Coordinator of Orphan Voyage, Cedaredge Colorado 81413

Out of twentyeight years of intensive and continuous experience with all parties in adoption, hearing their requests for aid, helping as I have been able to, I urge the Senate's consideration of this proposal and its passage. A mountain of grief and bewilderment lies within this population, and only a hard heart will view it and not be dismayed.

This bill provides a means for people in the population of adoption to become reconciled with one another, no matter how many years have elapsed since the adoption took place. Hopefully the implementation suggested by S989 will occur during the lifetimes of a majority of this population, and that those seeking to become reconciled may not meet only a gravestone.

The population of adoption is frequently calculated, or estimated, as being about 5 million adoptees, which when expanded to include all parties rises to a significant number of 25 million souls, give or take a few hundred or a few thousand duplications. If one adds to this a perhaps equal number of other significant parties, grandparents, spouses, offspring, siblings, we reach a rather staggering total which may be close to a third of the present population of the United States currently connected, by degrees of intimacy, with the process of adoption.

The ages of these people are adult, except for the relatively few, proportionately, who are still "under-age adoptees". The rest are all people of adult years, presumably emancipated citizens with rights and responsibilities equal to all other citizens of the United States.

Surely no one questions the virtue of reconciliation. It is an ancient virtue, sometimes difficult to attain, but never disputed as a cardinal element in any society's life. When it is discouraged, the basic and unresolved negative emotions remain, resentment being the principal one. This is a cancer in the body of society, which needs our earnest help in its removal.

Yet when, for reasons only gradually becoming clear, society, in its social work disguise promulgated the plan of sealed record adoption, it did fail in its responsibility to promote reconciliation and to help eradicate the unsocial element of resentment. Now, in S989, it has an opportunity to provide a remedy for the use of this important segment of society.

Some might question the use of the federal arm of government for an individual, even a private venture in reconciliation. There would be no need for the use of the federal arm, except for three facts:

One: The population of this country is highly mobile, and often has moved in residence far from the site of any adoption with which it is connected. States cannot properly legislate for citizens spread about the entire country.

Two: Records are inaccessible, even through offered legal procedures; they are falsified; those subject to the seal may not even know where an adoption took place. There are no clues to begin a private search, in many, many cases.

Three: The federal arm of government was, and remains, highly instrumental in the promotion of the seal in adoption, that very element which has provoked the necessity of a remedy. The United States Children's Bureau, since the mid-1940's, has spent large sums in promoting the sealed-record form of adoption, through field work and central publicity. It still maintains enthusiasm for this form of adoption, and has failed to promote reconciliation among the parties.

This suggested small outlay of public funds can produce more good than any other outlay of this size, or even of enormous size. For it will serve to reduce grief and bewilderment, and will also reduce the hardness of heart which has come to sully the institution of adoption, so that it is no longer a humane and viable practice but an enormous and problematic institution.

Sincerely

Jean N Paton

Jean N Paton
Coordinator

July 27 1981

I attach as a part of this statement:

1 Brochure of Orphan Voyage
2 Overture 39, "On Supporting Legislation Regarding the Rights of Adult Adoptees and Their Natural Parents" Passed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, 1981.

82-379 O—81——9

The LOG of Orphan Voyage Cedaredge CO 81413 July 1981

BASIC SUPPORT FROM THE PRESBYTERIANS, in national convention 1981

Overture 39 - ON SUPPORTING LEGISLATION REGARDING THE RIGHTS OF ADULT ADOPTEES AND THEIR NATURAL PARENTS:

Whereas God our Creator saw fit to use an adult adoptee who was well aware of the truth of his origins to deliver the Israelites from bondage to the Egyptians; and

Whereas the Psalmist acknowledged the Presence of God in the creation of every individual when he said,"You created every part of me; you put me together in my mother's womb...when I was growing there in secret, you know that I was there - you saw me before I was born"; and

Whereas Isaiah affirmed the unlikelihood of a mother's ability to erase the memory of a child she birthed when he said, "So the Lord answers,'Can a woman forget her own baby and not love the child she bore?' Even if a mother should forget her child, I will never forget you"; and

Whereas Jesus said, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free"; and

Whereas the "sealed records laws" instituted in the last five decades have prevented adopted persons, over whom a contract is made in their infancy when they are helpless to participate in it, from ordinarily knowing the truth of their origins by permanently sealing original birth certificates and agency and court records pertaining to their adoption; and

Whereas although any nonadopted person in the United States has the absolute right to obtain personal vital statistics for a minimal fee, an adoptee must go to court, however expensive and unsuccessful the process, to request a judge to issue a "good cause" order to know the simple truth of who gave birth to him or her; and

Whereas because of permanently sealed records, adoptees have no medical, cultural or religious history and often experience emotional anguish; and

Whereas permanently sealed records have created a mythology about adoption, which is that adopted persons have only one set of parents; the surrender paper in effect becomes a certificate attesting to the death of any relationship at any time between the original parent and child, thus creating for the child a pair of ghost parents who are not in their graves but who may live in the next town, or have hereditary illnesses that do not surface until they are in their middle years (long after any medical history taken at the time of the child's birth), and whose children, born later, may unknowingly risk incest when they attend college or work in the same work places with their half sisters or brothers; and

Whereas our Lord spoke often of acceptance, forgiveness, and reconciliation as qualities desirable for believers to experience daily in their human and spiritual growth; and

Whereas the Federal Department of Health and Human Services now has before it the Model State Adoption Act, which includes "Title V. Records," which would grant adult adoptees the right of access to their original records to learn their identity at birth and that of their natural parents and which would grant original parents of adult adoptees the right to ask the agency that handled the adoption to contact the adult adoptee to notify her or him that the original parent desires contact - a section supported in testimony by the National Association of Social Workers, "Not all adoptees will wish to know the birth parent, nor to meet her or him. But surely the option should be there as opposed to a rigid secrecy which can leave adoptees feeling that there is some monstrous secret in their past," and by Dr. Marion Wilson, Assistant Director of the Bureau of Laboratories, New York City Department of Health, "Nothing could be more fundamental to human continuity than an understanding of biologic heritage."

Therefore, the Presbytery of Newton, meeting at Madison, N.J. on March 10,1981, respectfully overtures the 193rd General Assembly (1981), as follows:

To go on record as supporting the rights of adult adoptees to receive, upon request, copies of their original birth certificates and court and agency records pertaining to their adoption;

To support Title V of the Model State Adoption Act and Procedures, prepared under Section 202 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978, which would grant adult adoptees the aforementioned information and which would grant natural parents a more limited right as explained above;

To act through the General Assembly Mission Council in encouraging and stimulating synods, presbyteries, and local churches to take the following types of action in supporting adoptees who have reached adulthood, in their desire to know the truth of their origins:

(1) send letters of support of Title V of the Model State Adoption Act to congressmen and to the President of the United States.

(2) write letters to the editors of local newspapers and national magazines expressing support of open records.

(3) work to help all persons involved in the adoption triangle-natural and adoptive parents and adoptees, who comprise 10 percent of our population-face the reality of their situations with honesty, openness, and compassion for one another.

CONCERNED UNITED BIRTHPARENTS, INC.

UB

TESTIMONY OF

CONCERNED UNITED BIRTHPARENTS, INC.

before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON

AGING, FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES

LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF THE

UNITED STATES SENATE

JULY 29, 1981

submitted July 29, 1981

Phone (617) 673-2653

National Headquarters: P.O. Box 573, Milford, Massachusetts 01757

Pioneers in Encouraging Adoption

552

As the President of Concerned United Birthparents, Inc. (CUB, Inc.), I am writing to respectfully request that the perspectives of our membership be included in your deliberations of S.989.

CUB, Inc. is a national, non-profit organization incorporated in 1976 under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. At this writing we have a paid membership of 2,500 persons and 38 branches around the Country. Our membership is composed of birthparents (mothers and fathers who have lost children to adoption), adoptees, adoptive parents, and others interested in the concept of humanizing adoption and restoring rootedness.

In CUB's early years, our purpose was a unique one in these United States -- to provide support to parents who were grieving the loss of their children to adoption. As our core members grew in self-understanding and self-worth, we were able to expand the scope of our program to meet the varied needs of the more than 35,000 people who requested our services. Basically, our program is now concerned with affirming and strengthening birth families, humanizing adoption, and restoring rootedness.

Levin's bill is a humanistic and highly potential effort toward mending the lives of family members who have lost track of each other because of the arbitrarily imposed "confidential" policies of agency adoptions.

Because tax-supported agencies promulgated the separation in the first place, it seems appropriate to us for a tax-supported entity to act as a clearinghouse for those who wish reunion. In a mobile society such as ours, centralization of information is necessary to truly maximize this effort.

As William Pierce noted in his testimony, it is true that many adoption support groups, including ours, maintain reunion registries. With some help from our Friend Upstairs, we are often able to effect reunions. Largely, though, it becomes a matter of chance - both parties writing to the same organization - for there is no mechanism for groups to exchange information.

Recently this resulted in tragedy.. One mother registered with us, her son with ALMA. Escaping a "match", they each spent the next four years looking for each other. When the son finally located her, he also learned she had died - at the kitchen table, suddenly, at only 44 years of age - two months before. Reading her earlier correspondence, and as a professional counsellor, I can deduce that her frustration and lifelong yearning to know the welfare of her con contributed to her "giving up" on life.

Sharing this brings up another urgent point. As mentioned earlier, CUB has heard from over 35,000 people since 1976. Of this number, over 18,000 were mothers and fathers who have lost children to adoption. They write to us because we alone understand the enormous grief they carry, often in silence. They are at various stages of their griefwork. Some still cower in fear of social ostracism. Others have "told" a few close friends. Others are now, or have always been, open about their experience. All - EXCEPT SEVEN - want desperately to know the welfare of their child. The ramifications of the anguish of not-knowing can not be minimized. In preliminary research, we have discovered that 38% are so traumatized by the experience of losing a child to adoption, they are unable to have another.

Unlike purported evidence which claim the majority of birthparents do not wish and could be devastated by reunion, I offer responsible officials the opportunity to authenticate CUB's findings by auditing our past and future correspondence and research.

Levin's bill could be an important move toward establishing an adoption system which is equitable and humane. I do have some concerns, however.

1. Restrictions. The mandatory registration of both birthmother and birthfather before release of information is an unworkable plan. Even if both birthmother and birthfather register, it is conceivable, given the complexities of human nature, that someone in either family would prefer the reunion did not take place. It seems to us that if two people register with the desire to meet, then that is sufficient reason for the event.

2. Intermediary. This should not be an imposition. It could, however, be available. If an intermediary is desired, it should be a trained peer.

3. Population. This clearinghouse provides an opportunity for others in our nation who have been separated from family to enjoy reunion. Many write CUB and join our registry who have lost track of a counterpart due to divorce, family feud and kidnapping.

4. Administration. Consistent with our concern that intermediaries, if used, be trained peers, we also strongly feel the program should be administered and personned by those who have experienced separation and reunion, and can work on the dynamics of reunion in positive fashion.

In her testimony Ms. Richardson stated: "To be free in intimate personal life choices should remain a concept vigorously protected by the law." I offer that this right of choice should extend equally; in this case, to separated family members.

As a former member of the Model Adoption Act Panel, I am once again prepared to work with legislators and others interested in choices for all persons. If I may, at this time, respond to other questions on this issue please do not hesitate to inquire. In the meantime, thank you for your kind attention and consideration.

Respectfully submitted

Lee H. Campbell, M.Ed.
President

Enclosures:

"The Birthparent's Perspective"

"Understanding the Birthparent"

"The Birthparent's Right to Know"

"The Social Worker's Role in Adoption"

Respond:

Ms. Lee H. Campbell, M.Ed.
CUB's Dover Office
595 Central Avenue
Dover, New Hampshire 03820

603, 749-3744

August 2, 1981

Senator Jeremiah Denton
Chairman, Subcommittee on Aging, Family and Human Services
Room A 624
119 D St. N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Denton:

I am writing to you regarding the testimony heard on July 23, 1981 regarding S 989, Senator Levin's bill in support of a National Reunion Registry. I would like my letter entered as part of that testimony.

In reading the opposition testimony, I honestly don't know where to begin with my comments. I should say that I am a 38 year old adult adoptee, reunited with my birthmother several years ago, and now serve in the capacity of Executive Director for a search/support group called SEARCH. We have a membership of 114 people representing all members of the adoption triangle. Our group has had 131 reunions and have had only five rejections. I speak from my heart and from what I have learned over my five years in the movement to open records to adult adoptees.

The idea of a National Reunion Registry is an excellent one. Mr. Pierce would have us believe this should be carried out on a state level, but this would not work and I will tell you why. Many adoptees are born in one state and then adopted in another. The birthmother or birthfather willing to be in a state registry, would enter their identifying information in the state of birth, while the adoptee would probably enter his or her information in the state of her adoption. Many adoptions are recorded improperly, in some cases the place of birth is even allowed to be changed. (New Jersey).

Mr. Pierce also presents a survey that indicates "the majority of biological parents do not wish to be contacted." How can anyone make a statement like that? Have enough birthparents been surveyed to really come up with an accurate poll? Emma Vilardi has indicated the tremendous increase in birthparents registering with her Soundex. CUB, a birthparent organization, has had 35,000 contacts in their short existence. (see attachment #1). I also think the 260 search/support groups accross the country can testify to the tremendious increase in calls from birthparents. Many of them will never actively search for the adoptee, but are willing to place their name in a registry. The Children's Home Society of California also prepared a survey several years ago which contradicts the NY Times survey. Perhaps you might get a copy of it to balance out what is being said.

I am shocked that the video from NBC MAGAZINE was even allowed to be played. Does the Senate also allow an article from the ENQUIRER to be presented as fact and representative of what is really happening nationally? I would hope not. Where did NBC dig up these people? Were the stories in fact true? Why would a woman raped 20 years ago, hiding this horrible fact all these years, even from her children, suddenly "tell all" before millions of viewers? None of this has anything to do with a National Reunion Registry. These horror stories would not have occurred if both people were willing to be found. We are talking about two adult parties both indicating a willingness to be reunited through a registry, not some person knocking on a door. There is a difference, I would hope you recognize this difference.

Mr. Pierce also feels the Federal Government should not duplicate services that are already being provided by the Reunion Registries of Orphan Voyage, Alma, C.U.E., A.I.M., etc. How would anyone know about all these registries? And how could one afford them all? The International Soundex Reunion Registry is not a free registry, it is simply being financied by Emma Vilardi's husband. How long he will be able to do so is questionable. Mr. Pierce gave false information when he suggested that ALMA charges an initial $30 registration fee. This is untrue! They charge a yearly fee of $30, and if you do not renew your membership at the end of each year, your information will be pulled from their reunion registry. (see attachment #2)

I dislike Mr. Pierce's proposal that an intermediary be involved at all in a match between two willing people. They are not needed. They would only make the cost greater.

Mrs. Richardson's arguements seem to be more on an emotional level. She equates the "search" as disrupting to the family unit. She also sees this registry as "a start toward unsealing records which are considered privileged." A National Reunion Registry has nothing to do with unsealing any adoption records, nor does it even mention the subject. One has absolutely nothing to do with the other. Two people are indicating a willingness to be reunited through the registry. They are not hiring private detectives, hiring lawyers, petitioning courts, seeking information from adoption agencies. Let us not confuse the issue.

I am also uncomfortable with the statement, "we believe that our view on the legislation is shared by the overwhelming majority of adoptive parents in this country and by numerous religious, social and political groups." First of all, is Mrs. Richardson indeed able to speak for "the overwhelming majority". I think not. I am enclosing two articles for a different view. One a clipping from the Phoenix Gazette, the other an article in Redbook by Margaret Mead. (attachment #3 and attachment #4). I must also add that we have had many adoptive parents attend our monthly meetings with their adoptees, thus sharing the search experience with them. Many of them also meet after the reunion occurs.

She also speaks of the numerous religious, social and political groups that are against this bill. Who are they? I have heard of no religious, social or political groups coming out against S 989. I only know what I hear and what I read. I enclose a statement made by the Presbytery of Newton at their National Conference in favor of open records. (see attachment #5). Other religious people carrying very favorable stories on reunions include Christian Life Magazine published in Wheaton, Illinois and AWAKE published by Watchtower. (see attachment #6).

I could go on, but I feel I have touched on the major issues. I hope and pray that your subcommittee will seriously consider the very positive outcome S 989 could bring about. Thank you for listening to me.

Most sincerely,

Karen L. Tinkham

Karen L. Tinkham
P.O. Box 1432
Litchfield Park, Aris 85340
Encl/6

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

NOV 5 198

Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman, Committee on Labor
and Human Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hatch:

Thank you for your letter of October 20th also signed by Senator Edward Kennedy and Senator Jeremiah Denton in regard to the administration of the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs (OAPP).

At the present time, OAPP is administering the FY 1981 grantees under Title VI and will continue to do so. Programs mandated under Title XX -- The Adolescent Family Life Act -- are also slated to be administered by OAPP which will report directly to the Assistant Secretary for Health.

If I can be of any further assistance on this matter, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas R. Donnelly, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for Legislation

QUESTION: Does the Administration favor some form of tax relief for adoptive parents, if so, can you describe the means that the Administration would prefer to use in giving that tax relief?

ANSWER: As you may be aware, tax relief in the form of deductions for certain adoption expenses are currently being provided for by Section 222 as added by the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 (signed by the President August 13, 1981). These expenses are directly related to the legal adoption of a child with special needs. Therefore, any subsequent tax relief for adoptive parents would be in addition to that currently provided for in P.L. 96-35.

The Administration opposes any additional tax relief for adoption expenses. The current bills before the Senate (S. 608, S. 1479 and S. 1580) provide, in effect, Federal aid for adoption. Providing Federal aid for adoptions, under present budgetary conditions, through the reimbursement to taxpayers for adoption expenses could be enormously costly. We believe any tax benefits should be available only in connection with the adoption of hard-to-place children as current legislation provides.

Question:

Senator Denton. Does the Administration have an established position on the question of trans-racial adoption?

Mr. Master. Well, again, I think there are two parts. One is that I am not sure the Administration feels it is required to have a position in this area, inasmuch as the policy decisions in the context of the new federal role would be made by states, localities, private agencies, et cetera.

Our primary emphasis is on the adoption of special needs youngsters.

Senator Denton. Well, I say this out of personal familiarity with a program which involves encouragement of adoption, or at least citizenship with adoption of children fathered overseas by American servicemen, for example, and other Americans, presumably.

Do you have any position or awareness of that, and what is your personal, and if you can say so, the Administration's attitude toward that particular area?

Answer:

The Administration does not have a position on trans-racial adoption. The Administration feels that this is a policy decision which is appropriate to states and localities, since all adoptions are carried out by states in accordance with their own laws.

In its focus on the adoption of special needs children the government has identified and supported public and voluntary efforts to find minority families for waiting minority children. These

children represent a substantial percentage of the children waiting for adoptive homes, whose needs have not been addressed by the more traditional adoption services.

The Administration also does not have a position on the problems of children fathered overseas by American servicemen. We are aware that these children tend to have difficult experiences and that they pose special problems with respect to citizenship and immigration.

The Department has developed and published Intercountry Adoption Guidelines and a National Directory of Intercountry Adoption Service Resources. The purpose of these materials was to pull together all of the complex policy and procedural steps which are pertinent to intercountry adoption by American citizens, and to establish a directory of state and national resources to which people could go for additional information and assistance. While these materials do not address the problem of children fathered overseas by American servicemen or take any position on trans-racial adoption, they are valuable resources for Americans interested in adopting AmerAsian children.

Senator DENTON. The hearing stands adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 1:28 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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